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Seeing Imagism: A Poetics of Literary Visualization

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ABSTRACT

Seeing Imagism: A Poetics of Literary Visualization

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This dissertation investigates the ways in which poetry encourages visual images in the reader. This investigation breaks new ground, for in the wake of behaviorist psychology and the linguistic turn in literary theory, literary critics have ignored and often spurned the visual imagination. The project uses Imagist poetry as a case study, for several reasons: the movement valorized the "image," a vague but provocative entity; Imagist doctrine is full of strong appeals to vision and the reader's eye; and the movement inaugurated modern (20th century) poetry in English, and is thus historically crucial. This dissertation argues that Imagist poetry sustains its visual claims through several textual features that promote mental imagery for readers. Significantly, diction is only one influence on image formation; grammar, metaphor, and meter are also key. This project examines five textual features - concreteness, parataxis, image metaphor, prompting, and free verse - and analyzes each feature's appeal to imagery through the latest insights of cognitive psychology. Concrete diction is primary: research reveals that concrete words produce more vivid images than abstract words, and in a shorter time. That Imagism's embrace of the concrete yields clear cognitive effects is perhaps an unsurprising notion. However, larger poetic structures also influence visualization. Research on sentences indicates that paratactic structures encourage more imagery than hypotactic structures, so the leaps and disjunctures common to Imagist poetry are likely to spur visualization. Further, many

Imagist poems contain what cognitive scientists call “image metaphors,” which imply a visual resemblance between two terms and thus encourage the reader to form an image. In addition, Imagist poems often thematize the act of seeing and thus implicitly “prompt” the reader to visualize, to see what the speaker sees. Finally, and most speculatively, research on music and cognition suggests that free verse may promote imagery more than metrical verse – a serendipitous outcome of metrical loosening. In broadest terms, this mode of analysis - a poetics of visualization - helps restore critical attention to the interaction of texts and the visual imagination.

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List of Abbreviations

Des Imagistes: An Anthology. [1914]	*1914*
Some Imagist Poets, 1915.	*1915*
Some Imagist Poets, 1916.	*1916*
Some Imagist Poets, 1917.	*1917*
Imagist Anthology 1930: New Poetry by the Imagists.	*1930*
T. E. Hulme. *Further Speculations*.	*FS*
T. E. Hulme. *Speculations*.	*S*
Ezra Pound. *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir*.	*GB*
Ezra Pound. *Literary Essays*.	*LE*

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Introduction

What do you see when you read? Certainly, you see the words on the page, but do you *see* anything in your mind? Do scenes and images appear to you as you make sense of the text? When you read this famous poem by William Carlos Williams —

so much depends
upon

the red wheel
barrow

glazed with rain
water

beside the white
chickens (277)

— do you see this scene mentally, the wet wheelbarrow next to the chickens? Do you see the sky, the ground, or any other parts of the picture not mentioned explicitly by the poem? When you think of this poem, will you remember the picture that you have created from the poem's visual cues?

Your answers to these questions are surely idiosyncratic: you may rarely employ visual images, or you may frequently use them. (In the psychological vocabulary, this makes you either a low or high imager.) In other words, as students of mental imagery repeatedly acknowledge,

some people experience visual images more than others, and even a group of high imagers will experience their imagery differently. Yet your answers to the questions above are only partly determined by idiosyncratic tendencies; your answers are also determined by the text itself. In other words, *what* you're reading plays just as important a role in visualization as *who* is reading it; the text sits alongside the reader as a key factor in mental imagery. Certain aspects, or features, of the reading material strongly influence the readers towards or away from visual images.

This study investigates the features of poetic texts that promote visualization. The project will focus on Imagism, the London-based poetic movement (1909-1917, roughly) that is often cited as the inauguration of modern poetry in English. Imagist poetic philosophy, especially as promoted by Ezra Pound, Amy Lowell, and T. E. Hulme, stressed precision, economy, and irregular rhythms; the Imagists valorized "the image" as the hallmark of their poetry. Imagist theories of poetry were heavily marked with metaphors and claims about vision and the eye, and such a visual interest may be especially appropriate given what the poetry does. That is, Imagist poetry manifests several features that encourage visualization in the reader; these features promote a visual response that seems to validate the ocularity of Imagist poetics. Imagist poetry is visual poetry, derived from visual poetics. This study analyzes how a visual poetics takes root as visual poetry – how Imagist poetry so often manages to make readers see. (Given this emphasis on visualization, this project will treat "imagery" in its sense of mental imagery, and almost always in its specifically visual form; "imagery" will not apply to the vague and somewhat problematic sense of figurative language.)

This project proposes that five features of Imagist poetry solicit visualization in the reader. Those features are concreteness, parataxis, image metaphor, visual prompting, and free

verse. Two of these, concreteness and free verse, explicitly derive from Imagist poetics; the other three – parataxis, image metaphor, and visual prompting – occur as logical extensions of these poetic principles. These features occur throughout Imagist poetry, and each contributes, cumulatively, to the claim that Imagist poetry promotes visualization in its readers.

The fruits of this study, however, should apply to more than just the small (but important) plot of early 20th century poetry. The features studied here are relevant not just to Imagism but to writing in general. Certainly, an aspect such as free verse is specific to poetry, but the principles behind its analysis extend to non-poetic contexts. And image metaphor (metaphor linking two concrete things), while perhaps more common in poetry than in prose, certainly exists outside of poetry. The other features apply even more broadly. The analysis here is applicable to a wide range of texts, literary and otherwise.

This project examines the experience of literary visualization, specifically in the context of modern poetry. But there is a larger area of investigation lurking behind it – the more general topic of visualization, a field of inquiry dating back to Sir Francis Galton, who in 1883 presented university students with a survey asking, among other things, whether they could mentally recall the items on their breakfast tables. (They could, and Galton reported that women were stronger imagers than men.) This larger field investigates what people mentally see, and how they use these images in memory and problem-solving. The smaller field of literary visualization extends at least as far back as Downey (1912), who studied how subjects use imagery to represent themselves in texts. This project calls upon empirical studies of visualization in both the general and literary contexts in order to support its claims about Imagist poetry and the experience of reading it.

This study asserts that the visual imagination is a key (though neglected) component of the reading experience, and therefore holds that understanding the visual imagination will contribute to our overall understanding of the reading experience. This study approaches the workings of the visual imagination through the framework of Imagist poetry, but the insights into mental imagery are by no means limited to this specific genre.

Visualization and its Discontents: The Philosophical and Scientific Background

Visualization has held a prominent place in the Western philosophical tradition. Philosophers have long debated the role of mental imagery in thought and memory, and more recently (since the late 19th century) psychologists have conducted experiments to clarify that role.

The philosophical interest in visualization extends as far back as Plato, who espoused the "wax tablet" model for memory; according to this model, copies of perceptions and thoughts are impressed as images on the tablet. (As Stephen Kosslyn points out, this model is likely the first model to distinguish between representations and their medium, between the images themselves and the tablet [1981, 207].) Aristotle developed Plato's model further. To Aristotle, images operate as inner pictures, copies of the real thing; images are copies in that they resemble what they represent. (Essentially, this conception is what later became known as the "picture theory" of images.) These images serve the memory; in *De Anima* Aristotle refers to "calling up a picture – as in the practice of mnemonics – by the use of mental images" (427b, 19). In this work Aristotle also claims a deep cognitive function for these images: "the soul never thinks without a mental image" (431a, 15). In other words, thought depends upon (or in a weaker, less likely reading, is always accompanied by) mental images; mental images underlie all thought.

Much later, Rene Descartes challenged Aristotle's claim that images are necessary for cognition. Descartes distinguished between imagining a thing and conceiving of that thing. (Note that what Decartes calls "imagining" a thing we term "imaging" or "visualizing" it; mental imagery is just one part of the broader imagination.) Descartes notes that one can easily imagine the difference between simple geometric figures – say, a rectangle, an a pentagon. With the case of the chiliagon (a 1,000-sided figure), though, one may *conceive* that it is different than a 999-sided figure, but one would be hard pressed to mentally imagine (i.e., visualize) the difference (Roeckelein 147). This thought experiment separates out the processes of imagination and conception – though even with the chiliagon, one might argue that its conceived difference from the 999-sided figure is predicated upon the logic of the imagined simpler figures. In any case, the challenge to Aristotle was clear.

The British Empiricist philosophers – Locke, Berkeley, and Hume – also took up the case of mental imagery within the cognitive system. In general, all three held that thought derives from the manipulation or combination of simple images taken from perceptual experience; yet they differed in how they accounted for the details of this system. Locke asserted the strongest pro-imagery stance, defining memory as the storage of images and language-learning as the coordination of sounds and images. To Locke, ideas are represented as images, and ideas and images are interchangeable. Abstract ideas are merely those sensations or images that have lost detail over time. Berkeley claimed that mental images and percepts are related, and both integral to thought, but he denied the possibility of abstract images, or "generalized images." For Berkeley, each idea-image must have a clear color and shape. For his part, Hume contended that ideas are "faint images" of sense impressions; images are like sensations, but less vivid. One thinks by combining these images. Hume agreed with Berkeley's renunciation of Locke's

abstract ideas, and more originally, Hume argued that interpretation must join resemblance within "pictorial representation" (Roeckelein 148-9).

In the 19th century Wilhelm Wundt, a German philosopher and psychologist, began the experimental investigation of mental imagery. Wundt is largely credited with inaugurating the field of experimental psychology, in 1879 at the University of Leipzig. Imagery was central to Wundt's cognitive theory of *structuralism*, a theory that asserted, alongside the British Empiricist philosophies before it, that higher-level mental phenomena develop from the combination of lower-order phenomena. A structural analogy with chemistry obtained here: Wundt conceived of sense data experiences as "mental atoms," and these atoms combined in associative groups. E. B. Titchener, a student of Wundt's and the leading American Structuralist, extended Wundt's system even farther, asserting the Aristotelian claim that all mental activity involves images. As Morris and Hampson, two modern theorists, put it, Titchener "equated thought with conscious content that was reducible, in turn, to a series of mental images" (6).

Against these commitments to imagery came the psychological experiments of Oswald Kulpe in 1893. In his laboratory at Wurzburg, Germany, Kulpe asked participants to judge the heaviness of weights, respond to a word with another that rhymes, or respond to a word with the category it belongs to (Roeckelein 154). From these experiments Kulpe held that thought can occur without reportable or conscious imagery; contra Titchener's claims, "imageless thoughts" do exist. In response Titchener noted that such in similar experiments at Cornell participants *always* cited mental imagery, though not always visual imagery. Titchener and Wundt also claimed that Kulpe's experiments did not examine thinking *per se*, but rather the effects or

residue of previous experience (Roeckelein 155). These disagreements and entrenched psychological commitments composed the first imagery debate.

This debate was short-lived, however. In 1913 Watson published an article, "Psychology as the Behaviorist Views It," that called for a new psychological approach. This approach, behaviorism, banished introspection from the psychologist's methodological repertoire: "The time has come when psychology must discard all reference to consciousness"; "Psychology, as the behaviorist views it, is a purely objective, experimental branch of natural science which needs introspection as little as do the sciences of chemistry and physics" (163, 176). Watson asserted that introspection invited error because it was not sufficiently empirical; images were "mere ghosts of sensations" (Roeckelein 439). By this logic imagery was no longer a valid subject for scientific investigation: as Esrock puts it, "Claims about visual imagery, a paradigmatic form of mental experience, could not be proved or disproved because the issue could not be treated scientifically: reports about visual imagery are reports about private experiences" (3). Further, and perhaps more significantly, imagery was banished from the cognitive system, and its previous role in mediating thought and memory was taken by verbal responses, which were seen as empirically verifiable. As Sadoski and Paivio note, "The mental functions that had been attributed to images became the burden of words; habitual overt and covert verbal responses were the vehicle of thought and the definition of meaning" (38). In the behaviorist system, thought was very close to internal vocalization – as Watson framed it in 1919, "thought is merely the action of language mechanisms" (Roeckelein 207). Behaviorism denied mental imagery any functional significance, and re-attributed all of its possible significance to the linguistic sphere.

Given these methodological commitments, it comes as no surprise that the number of studies on mental imagery declined drastically in the behaviorist era. From roughly 1920 to 1970, imagery simply was not considered a valid object of study. (And as we shall consider later, the investigation of imagery declined not just in the scientific context but also the literary one.) Yet mental imagery managed to appear in a few scientific formulations, though often under aliases. Tolman's (1948) cognitive maps and Osgood's (1953) representational mediation process both edged close to theories of mental imagery; Leuba (1940) catalogued images as "conditional sensations" and Skinner (1953) treated imagery as conditioned seeing. But only a few Anglophone psychologists, such as Bartlett (1932), bucked the *de facto* ban on imagery research and studied it openly (Morris and Hampson 7).

In the 1960s, with the rise of cognitive psychology, interest in mental imagery began to creep back into the scientific arena. Though many cognitive psychologists, like behaviorists, rejected introspection as a scientific tool, they broke with behaviorism by devoting attention to internal mental states (like desires and goals) and internal representations of the world. These internal mental states could simplify the convoluted behaviorist theories that attempted to synthesize only action and language use. Within this new, looser scientific framework thinkers began discussing mental images again: Richardson (1969), Paivio (1971), and Sheehan (1972) were among the first to investigate mental imagery after behaviorism. (Morris and Hampson note, though, that McKellar broached the topic, albeit less directly than later investigators, as far back as 1957 [7].) Mental imagery slowly re-emerged as a valid topic for scientific inquiry, and has since become the subject of a second (after the Wundt-Kulpe "imageless thought" controversy) scientific debate.

The Contemporary Imagery Debate

This project takes place in front of the heated debate about mental images that has been stirring since the 1970s. The debate concerns the nature of the representations used to process images in the brain: are mental images ultimately represented as images or words, as depictive or propositional representations? Though the answer to this question has been vigorously contested, I hold that this project operates "in front of" this debate in order to locate the debate as relevant background information rather than the actual, deeper issue at hand. That is, the study of how Imagism solicits visualization neither informs the representational debate nor depends on its outcome: readers experience mental images regardless of the precise nature of how those images are represented cognitively. Nonetheless, because the debate is relevant to the topic, we will briefly chart its key principles and arguments.

Two camps emerge in the debate: the "depictionalists," who argue that mental images are stored in an image-like format, and the "descriptionalists," who hold that amodal propositions underlie mental images. The descriptionalists claim that a single representational format (propositions) underlies all thought, while the depictionalists claim that cognition depends on multiple representational systems; that is, the depictionalists claim that an image-based system operates alongside a propositional one, while the descriptionalists assert that there is only one amodal cognitive format. (Stephen Kosslyn, the arch-depictionalist, suggests that such singularity amounts to "propositional imperialism" [2006 6].) Further, and significantly, while the depictionalists claim that mental images are functional in that they are cognitively useful and informative, the descriptionalists counter that the true work of the brain takes place on a propositional level, and thus mental images are merely epiphenomenal to this fundamental linguistic processing.

Kosslyn, in his 2006 work, *The Case for Mental Imagery*, argues "that the imagery debate should now be settled, as much as any debate in science is ever settled" (20). Kosslyn asserts that recent neuroscientific data has convincingly swayed the debate for the depictionalist side over the counterclaims of the descriptionalists. For instance, Zenon Pylyshyn, the leading descriptionalist, proposed in 1981 a theory of "tacit knowledge" to accommodate experimental results that seemed to support functional consequences for imagery; according to this theory, subjects' unconscious knowledge of how perceptual systems work (e.g., that scanning between distant objects takes more time than scanning between close objects) determines how they respond to imagery experiments. That is, the "tacit knowledge" account suggests that subjects mimic perceptual situations without actually making use of image-based cognitive systems. Kosslyn declares and demonstrates that this descriptionalist reframing "is wildly implausible when neural data are considered" (60). Ultimately, his 2006 work argues convincingly for the depictionalist position, though he acknowledges that there will always be some room for continuing, and increasingly farfetched, descriptionalist rejoinders.

Though, as noted before, the specific questions of the "imagery debate" approach the questions of this project only tangentially, the debate has contributed significantly, though still indirectly, to the larger field of imagery research. That is, many researchers, intent on advancing the debate, have run experiments on the functioning of mental imagery; these experiments have helped to reveal aspects of imagery that are relevant to this project.

One particularly relevant theory within the larger imagery debate is the "dual coding theory." This theory, developed by Allan Paivio in the 1960s and 1970s, and championed and refined by him and others until today, asserts that words are represented in the brain through both the verbal code and the visual code. (Paivio now includes the visual code within a larger set of

imagery codes, but the visual element is still dominant within the imagery side of the theory.) This theory stands squarely in the depictionalist camp: it is one of the leading theories of cognitive representation that claim modality-specific representation (as opposed to theories that claim amodal representation only); but there are other prominent theories of modal representation, most notably Barsalou's perceptual symbols system. What proves significant about Paivio's theory, especially for the purposes of this project, is that these dual representative mediums are not accessed equally by all words; Paivio found that while all words access the verbal code, concrete words are far more likely to engage the visual code than abstract words. The dual coding theory thus proves very relevant for a study on visualization, especially given that the object of that study is determinedly concrete poetic language.

Visualization and its Discontents, part II: 20th Century Literary Criticism

Literary critics have long disagreed about the role of mental imagery in the reading process. In the eighteenth century, for example, Addison asserted in the *Spectator* that a scene described in words could outdo, in sensory terms, the actual perceived scene: "The reader finds a scene drawn in stronger colors and painted more to the life in his imagination by the help of words than by an actual survey of the scene which they describe" (560). Despite the power of Addison's claim, or perhaps because of it, a half century later Edmund Burke claimed in *The Sublime and the Beautiful* that imagery is vastly overrated as a literary response, and that if excited, specific mental images would only compromise the reader's affective response. Burke asserted: "So little does poetry depend for its effect on the power of raising sensible images, that I am convinced it would lose a very considerable part of its energy, if this were the necessary result of all description. Because that union of affecting words, which is the most powerful of all

poetic instruments, would frequently lose its force…if the sensible images were always excited" (170).

Such vibrant disagreement about the capacity of literary visualization seems to have continued in the first decades of the century. Theodor Meyer's untranslated 1901 work, *Das Stilgesetz der Poesie,* asserts that mental images play no role in many works of great literature. Wellek and Warren, whose critical contribution will be examined shortly, pick up on Meyer's work and cite it in support of their own claims. Theodor Adorno mentions Meyer in *Aesthetic Theory* and offers this gloss: "He showed that there is no sensuous intuition, no set of images, that corresponds to what literature says; on the contrary, its concretion consists in its linguistic form rather than in the highly problematic optical representation that it supposedly provokes" (97-98). In other words, literature exists as words only, not as mental imagery within the reader.

Against this assessment comes the strong claims of J. G. Jennings in his 1915 volume, *An Essay on Metaphor in Poetry*. Jennings notes that poets tend toward concrete representation, and holds that the reader can only accommodate this tendency by visualizing. Only in visualizing the concrete scenes will the reader grasp the poet's latent ideas: "Thus in reading poetry one of the first necessities is to visualize, to see clearly every picture as it is presented by the poet. Without visualizing the poet's words the reader in no sense has before him that which the poet had at the time of writing" (81-82). Against Meyer, Jennings makes two distinct claims: first, that poets actually "present" pictures in their writing; and second, that the reader must mentally see these pictures in order to understand the poetry. The first claim more radically opposes Meyer in that it assumes the presence of pictures, not just words, actually within the text. Significantly, though, the second claim implies that visualization is not an automatic, involuntary response but an effort that the reader must consciously exert as an interpretive tool.

Despite such early disagreement, as the 20th century continued on the anti-imagery camp grew dominant within the literary critical establishment. By 1930 literary critics generally agreed that mental images provoked by reading do not contribute significantly to the reading experience. Many influential critics held that mental images are happenstance phenomena created within the idiosyncratic confines of individual minds; readers, not texts, are responsible for creating images; images, therefore, should not matter for textual interpretation. What's more, these critics also charged that visual images often distract and deceive readers, sabotaging their interpretive experiences.

For example, in his 1929 volume *Practical Criticism* I. A. Richards collects and analyzes commentary on thirteen poems made by his Cambridge students. Richards treats the word "imagery" very specifically, in its sense of mental imagery. (His chapter on "Figurative Language" does not mention imagery; imagery appears, among other places, in the chapter on "Irrelevant Associations and Stock Responses.") In the course of working through the copious responses, Richards often warns against the dangers and seductions of visual images inspired by poetry. In short, he holds that mental images are troublesome and erratic: as products of the reader's mind rather than the poet's artistic intention, images are all too often idiosyncratic and irrelevant to the poem itself. Richards remarks that "images are erratic things; lively images aroused in one mind need have no similarity to the equally lively images stirred by the same line of poetry in another, and neither set need have anything to do with any images which may have existed in the poet's mind" (15). Richards soberly diagnoses varying capacities of visualization as "the incurable fact that we differ immensely in our capacity to visualize" (14); this gap, the gap that separates reader from reader and readers from the poet, is for Richards the original sin of mental imagery as a response to literature.

Richards insists that mental images are artifacts produced by the reader, not the poem. He works to divest visualizers of their illusion that the poem actually "contains" the images they see: "It may seem to the visualizers that the poet works through imagery, but this impression is an accident of their mental constitution, and people of different constitution have other ways of reaching the same results" (235). In other words, strong visualizers create images as a personal response to poetry; images are an "accident" caused not by the poem but by an unusual cognitive system responding as it must to the poem. Richards argues that mental images are indicators of the reader's state of mind regarding the poem: "Images in reading are perhaps best regarded as a *sign* of how the reader is getting on with the poem, they are hardly ever a means which the poet uses" (132). Though his notion of "getting on" is a bit loose (does it refer to enjoyment or comprehension?), Richards is clear that the reader's mental state actually determines what images appear. Given his reader-centered etiology, Richards has little sympathy for those respondents who complain about imagery. Chastising one reader for lamenting an unpleasant vision, Richards writes, "The reader has himself to blame if his image was actually unpleasant" (133). To another, who states rather calmly that a poem "leaves no very clear impression, it has no pictures in it," Richards responds with a reprimand: "The frustrated visualizer is here not a very sympathetic figure. Those who want pictures in their poems must put them in themselves" (49). That is, images are not just the "accidents" or indices of readers' minds, but also their burden, their responsibility. The poet and the poem are virtually exempt from the question of mental imagery.

In general Richards suspects and dismisses mental imagery. He warns, a bit ominously, that "visualizers are exposed to a special danger" (236). The danger is that the images are the reader's and not the poet's, and thus to evaluate the poem on the basis of those images is to

misrepresent the poem itself. Imagery does not necessarily reflect its source: "a poem which calls up a 'beautiful picture' is not thereby proved to be a good poem" (236). Richards suggests that this beauty may distract and fool the unwary reader; he compares mental images to billboards and print ads: "Colours and pictures, the appeal to the mind's eye, to the visualizer, are sources of attraction that able advertising agents have known and used for many years" (124). In this formulation, the reader who sees beautiful images is the gullible sot who has been seduced, it seems, by his own overzealous imagination; Richards inflects the "truly grand picture" that his student reported with touches of self-delusion and frippery. Like the consumer whose attention has been (problematically) redirected to the colorful display of a billboard, the student has been diverted from the goal of comprehension. Richards's stance towards mental imagery is perhaps best summed up by a wry jab he makes at a punctuation error: "The reader writes to me, 'I visualize everything otherwise, things mean little to me', developing by an accident of punctuation a criticism I would not be so rude to make" (133). Though Richards claims to turn away from so harsh a critique, his many other spirited charges demonstrate that the unwitting indictment – that visualization misrepresents poetry, and distracts the reader from true understanding – could easily be his own. To Richards, readers crafts images, to their own (and the poem's) peril.

We should be surprised that Richards dismisses mental images from the important work of literary critique. Richards, after all, boldly posited only five years before, in *Principles of Literary Criticism*, that poems are not material objects but rather subjective states of awareness: "Whether we are discussing music, poetry, painting, sculpture, or architecture, we are forced to speak as though certain physical objects — vibrations of strings and of columns of air, marks printed on paper, fabrics of freestone, are what we are talking about. And yet the remarks we

make as critics do not apply to such objects but to states of mind, to experiences" (22). In other words, a poem is not "marks printed on paper" so much as a "state of mind" – the reader's state of mind. Yet in spite of this psychological accounting, Richards does not see fit to award any real significance to mental images that arise within the reader's mind. His sincere psychological framework only makes his anti-imagery stance more harsh and surprising, and it helps reveals the depth of the stigma attached to mental imagery.

Wellek and Warren, in their influential *Theory of Literature* (1956), assert that "imagery" denotes only figurative language, and not mental images. They write that "Imagery…should not be confused with actual, sensuous, visual image-making"; they argue that literature often fails to call up these sensuous images: "much great literature does not evoke sensuous images, or, if it does, it does so incidentally, occasionally, and intermittently" (26). The authors cite the "psychological" novels of Dostoevsky and James as exemplars of literature that reveals the characters' states of mind but creates few vivid pictures of them. In other words, imagery is not visualization, and even if it were, literature does not depend on it by any stretch. What is also interesting is that Wellek and Warren challenge not just the place of mental imagery in literature but also figuration itself; that is, not only is mental imagery not necessary to literature, neither is figurative language, their primary sense of "imagery." They agree that poetic language is rife with everything from "simplest figures" to "all-inclusive mythological systems," but they ultimately hold that "imagery is not essential to fictional statement" (26). In other words, their treatment of "imagery" denies any identification with visual images but it also seriously limits the province of figurative language; imagery is linguistic, not visual, but in neither case is it essential to literature.

We must note that this rendering of imagery does not deny that mental images arise during reading, but declares that these images should neither count as "imagery" *per se* nor help define the literary experience. Just as countless literary critics have noted that one's comprehension of a poem or novel does not necessarily depend on mental imagery, Wellek and Warren urge that literature does not evoke visual images *at all times*. A similar sense of straining obtains here, and suggests that Wellek and Warren bristle at the general idea that literature consistently creates visual images in the reader. Though they do not even count mental imagery as imagery proper, they make sure to demonstrate that this spurious cousin of true imagery does not operate in all literary texts.

Finally, Wellek and Warren do acknowledge a connection between mental imagery and figurative language; given their disregard for mental imagery, however, they deign to acknowledge this connection only negatively. They note, "If we had to visualize every metaphor in poetry we would be completely bewildered and confused" (27). That is, some metaphors will not translate into cogent mental images. (Note that the authors do not make the stronger claim that some or all metaphors cannot be visualized at all.) Apparently, however, many metaphors will translate into mental images. Wellek and Warren suggest, though, that the question of visualization should take a backseat to questions of the fundamental cognitive process of metaphor: "While there are readers given to visualizing and there are passages in literature where such imaginings seem required by the text, the psychological question should not be confused with analysis of the poet's metaphorical devices. These devices are largely the organization of mental processes which occur also outside of literature" (27). Wellek and Warren go on to describe this process as the metaphorical transfer of concrete physical

relationships to abstract ideas, a transfer cognitive linguists call "metaphorical grounding"; for instance, "comprehend" derives from *prehendere*, to grasp.

Their point, then, is that this deeper process of metaphorical transfer should interest the reader more than the "psychological question" of visualization. It is a bit odd, however, that their argument against visualization details a deeper process in which abstract entities reduce to concrete things or actions that are easily visualized. And certainly, despite their larger point, Wellek and Warren's proleptic offering ("while there…are passages…where such imaginings seem required by the text") points directly to the heart of our enterprise, with even more force ("required") than we claim for it. (This study holds that the text often *solicits* rather than *requires* or *guarantees* mental imagery.) The treatment of visualization in *Theory of Literature*, then, both implies and directly asserts that readers form mental images, even as Wellek and Warren attempt to inoculate both figuration and literature at large against those images.

William Empson, a leading New Critic and a student of I. A. Richards, critiques the notion of imagery in a 1962 essay. He charges that imagery is a "grand delusion" (45), primarily because mental images, he contends, have no cognitive function. Empson argues that an emphasis on the visual image, popularized by Imagism, compromises metaphorical meaning by neglecting the interaction among the metaphorical terms. In his view a visual approach to poetry adds little to understanding and in fact encourages a shallow, wrongheaded reading.

Empson repeatedly insists that mental images exert no role in thought. On the notion that the mind thinks with images, Empson offers the analogy of the "primitive" explanation for hearing: "'There's a little man in your ear; he listens, and tells you.' Thus the striking thing about the primitive explanation is that it does not explain anything" (46). Likewise, the notion that pictures sit in the mind and mediate thinking does not elucidate the actual mechanisms of

thought at all. Empson describes the example of a blindfolded chess player working through nineteen simultaneous games, and notes that even here (contrary to his original expectation) the player does not need mental imagery to play. Empson reprimands himself for "falling back on chatter about images when we don't know how a mind has worked" (48). Against this primitivism and chatter Empson confidently asserts that "people who do have images don't use them for thinking" (47). Images, it seems, are cognitive decorations, trappings.

Fittingly, Empson undercuts the role of visual imagery in poetic interpretation. He writes, "It seems to be hardly ever important to get a visual image. No doubt 'eyes like almonds' doesn't mean what it should unless you 'see' that the eye is *shaped* like an almond, but there the meaning itself is visual" (46). According to this logic, visual images only matter when they directly control, through obvious shape or motion signifiers, the meaning of the line. At the same time, however, it is hard to know just exactly when the meaning depends upon, rather than merely alludes to, the visual image; obviously enough, though, Empson believes that these situations are rare. Images, ancillary to thought, create meanings for poetry only in the most direct, definitional way, when the reader has to call on an image in order to see something else. (We should note here that such a direct, sensory model, though limiting, actually accounts for many of the metaphors within the concrete-based Imagist poetry.)

Finally, Empson singles out Imagism for critique. He notes flatly that "The trouble about Imagism and all its connections, which are still crawling about underfoot in the contemporary jungle and tripping up the innocent reader of poetry, is that it is determinedly anti-intellectual, and tells us we ought to try to be very stupid" (48). According to Empson, Imagism, through its focus on the image, forces or seduces its readers into only seeing mental images of the metaphorical vehicle, rather than attempting to square the logic of the vehicle with the actual

topic (tenor). Citing a metaphor in Marvell's "The Garden" – Marvell compares his mind to the sea – Empson reads the force of Marvell's comparison as mystically impudent and humorous. But the Imagist reader, on the other hand, would miss this depth: "an Imagist reader is not allowed to understand anything. If the poet says the mind is like the sea, then the Imagist reader must have a picture of the sea, in his head, and he must make a unique kind of muscular effort so as to never think of what is being talked about, the other half of the comparison, at all" (49). In other words, visual images prevent the "Imagist reader" from understanding the metaphorical terms in synthetic relation; the Imagist reader sees only one half of the metaphor, and therefore cannot understand its meaning. What Empson fails to clarify is how Imagist poetry so authoritatively controls the imaginative practices of its readers, how it solicits and receives the "unique kind of muscular effort" that closes off the relevant topic of the metaphor. (Alternatively, the "Imagist reader" could be a type of reader: one not necessarily produced by reading Imagist poetry, but rather just associated with its contemptible visuality.) Despite the murky provenance of the cycloptic Imagist reader, Empson holds that an interest in the image (the interest of Imagist poets) leads to the popular and baneful trend of metaphorical mis-reading, or half-reading; to Empson, readers who focus on the visual image vampirically suck the images out of their poetry and leave the deeper meanings moribund.

Not all New Critics disparaged the visual imagination. John Crowe Ransom, in his 1941 volume *New Criticism*, championed visual images as "icons," and even implied that poetry should serve not only the conceptual mind, but the imagistic one as well. Ransom wrote, "the poem, which is a discourse in words, may offer icons as easily as a painting does. The icons here are in the mind, they are the mental images evoked. The technical use of language by the poet is one that lifts words out of their symbolic or definitive uses into imaginative or image-provoking

ones" (286-287). To Ransom, the reader's mental images serve as visual likenesses of what the poem is describing; though these likenesses are in the mind, they represent the poem's contents in an iconic manner, much as a painted landscape would represent a physical scene to its viewer. Thus Ransom treats visual imagery as a vaunted textual effect to help poetry achieve parity with (or even overall dominance over) painting in the well-worn "sister arts" family competition. Note, too, that this account does not (unlike the other New Critical accounts) make visual images the product of a lonely, idiosyncratic reader; rather, the images are spurred by the forms of poetry, "the technical use of language by the poet." Ransom differs from his contemporaries at both ends of the imagery process by giving agency to the poet and the poem for the formation of the images, and by celebrating the visual images that arise in the reader's mind.

Despite such an occasional tribute to the visual imagination, the tide of critical opinion worked against imagery in the middle of the century. In 1970 one of the harshest and most sustained attacks on the literary image hit: P. N. Furbank's book, *Reflections on the Word 'Image'*. Furbank's volume attacks the image in two ways: as a literary misnomer, and as a cognitive ghost. On the first, Furbank rails against the casual use of the word "image" as a substitute for metaphor; the comparative aspect of the metaphor precludes seeing it as a picture. Furbank writes, "For, after all, a comparison is not a picture. If you read Milton's phrase 'a Forest huge of Spears', the final result of your reading can't be a picture, since you permanently cannot present something to your mind's eye as being both a forest and spears" (1). The possibility of combining the parts of the metaphor seems ludicrous to him; he terms any such attempted combination "a sort of hybrid or monster" (1). Furbank claims that a pictorial image is a likeness, but "an 'image' in the sense of metaphor cannot be a likeness of anything." Such a

denial depends on a narrow, physical reading of "likeness"; given Shakespeare's line, "the hearts That spaniell'd me at heels," Furbank contends, "But to say that courtiers fawning on a great man resemble spaniels fawning on their master is not saying that spaniels are a *likeness* of fawning courtiers, as Holbein's portrait is a likeness of Henry VIII" (8). The courtiers do not literally look like the spaniels, so the metaphor does not present a pictorial likeness; thus the metaphor is not a true image. Furbank only grants words their literal, material status as language: "what a poet produces is a certain arrangement of words" (47).

Furbank singles out the Imagist use of the word "image," and surprisingly, he does not savage their particular rendering. Rather, he suggests that the Imagists created a new, valuable application for the word: "It is best to understand the Imagist theorists, when talking of 'the Image', as referring to a complete Imagist poem" (39). Furbank approvingly cites Pound's "Vorticism" essay in which Pound, discussing Noh theater, argues that "the whole play may consist of one image. I mean it is gathered about one image"; Furbank declares that such a usage "has a certain aptness" (39). This tolerance and even enthusiasm for Pound's broad claim may seem odd for the taxonomically-inclined Furbank, but he has his reasons. Indeed, it is the very breadth and excess of Pound's claim that satisfies Furbank, because that excess prevents a misreading of "image" in its pictorial sense: "Used in this way [i.e., in reference to the whole poem], the word is suggestive, and not liable to be understood in any too-literal sense" (47). To Furbank, the expansive Imagist use of the term manages to avoid the thicket of inappropriately intertwined word/picture applications.

Furbank's frustration with the image cuts deeper than lax interartistic vocabulary, however. Indeed, Furbank asserts that mental images have no cognitive value. He reaches this conclusion in two different ways. One, the slightly more generous approach advanced by Sartre,

holds that images cannot surprise or teach one anything, because "a mental image is no less and no more than what you put there" (13). In other words, mental images merely replicate pre-existing thought. According to the second, less generous view, however, mental imagery is a delusion. That is, mental images do not actually occur in the brain, but people pretend (and seem to enjoy pretending) that they do: "One always needs to remind oneself of a simple fact about mental images — that they are make-believe. The person having them is pretending something to himself" (14). Furbank claims that this self-delusion infects literary treatments of the word image and imagery; because these discussions are built on terms that refer to cognitive ciphers, the discussions soon sound like "conversations between madmen" (16).

Despite the severity of this view – that images do not actually exist – Furbank refers to the experience of mental imagery on many occasions. Perhaps unsurprisingly, however, he refers to mental imagery only in the process of denying its literary value. In other words, while these citations of imagery implicitly undermine his logic of cognitive non-existence, these citations perform the useful function of demonstrating how problematic images are in the literary context. For example, Furbank notes that "the author can't control the reader's mental images"; the reader's images are a disordered mish-mash of personal recollections and tangential associations. (Luckily, however, in line with the New Critical affective fallacy "the actual content of readers' mental imagery doesn't matter" [8].) Further, the attempt to revise mental imagery alongside the quick turns of the text may frustrate readers. Considering Milton's line in which a giant pine is suddenly resized as a wand, Furbank claims that the reader cannot accommodate the quick change: "The reader is encouraged to do some fairly easy picturing…when he finds that he has been led into a trap…and he quickly gives up" (10). Here the reader *does* form images, but misleading ones. Finally, in what must be the strangest logic of

the book, Furbank suggests that the *ut pictura poesis* analogy misrepresents writers as painters because the reader actually does the work of "painting." He writes, "A writer has only to write the word 'beechtree' – he need not even call it a 'green' beechtree – for the reader to run up a completely imaginary beechtree for him on his own initiative. If the writer were literally a painter, he would have a soft job" (4). In effect, the textual picture is created not by subtleties in the writer's craft but by the reader's automatic, efficient faculty of mental imagery. It seems that mental images do exist, but only for Furbank's polemical purposes of undercutting the value of readerly imagery or the aptness of the sister arts analogy.

Critical Challenges to the Anti-Imagery Orthodoxy

Though there may have been early critical disagreement about the role of visualization in literary comprehension, later investigators, including many New Critics and Furbank, fundamentally agree that mental images have little, if any, literary value. The attempt to banish visualization from the field of literary studies has been noted by those interested in (and sympathetic to) the psychology of mental imagery. Ellen Esrock, in her pertinent work *The Reader's Eye*, suggests that literary critics followed the tide of behaviorism in rejecting introspection as an analytic tool; from the 1920s through the 1960s, in line with J.B. Watson's emergence at the head of this new arch-empirical methodology, critics argued vehemently against understanding literature in terms of the visual imagery it evokes. Since the 1960s, however, the battle has been won against mental imagery, and few critics deign to even dismiss it anymore (1).

Esrock argues that behaviorism in science and the "linguistic turn" in philosophy pervaded the literary establishment by the 1950s, directing all attention to the verbal structures of

the text rather than the larger reading experience: "Under the influence of European structuralism and the vestiges of the New Criticism, scholars had little reason to discuss readerly imaging because their focus was on the linguistic construction of the text — on the sounds of the words, inscribed as phonetic patterns, and on their meanings, identified as complex verbal networks" (2). Further, even when critics investigate the role of the reader in the literary process, they analyze the reader in linguistic and semantic terms that ignore the reader's mental imagery. Esrock asserts, "Whether readers are regarded psychoanalytically, as fragmented subjects, or politically, as members of competing interpretive communities, whether the actions of readers are better charted on a hermeneutic circle or on a semiotic grid, reader-oriented scholars still discuss only sounds and meanings" (2). In other words, even those critics most likely to investigate mental imagery – the reader response critics – chart their investigations along linguistic and semantic lines, ignoring introspection and visuality.

Despite the powerful renunciation of mental images in 20th century literary criticism, a few dissenting voices have spoken up. One voice, surely, is Esrock's – after diagnosing and critiquing the longstanding critical rejection of visualization, her book outlines the literary applications of psychological studies on imagery. Esrock traces the relevant empirical data and suggests that visualization exerts powerful, beneficial effects on readers. Another voice, though perhaps less forceful, is Elaine Scarry's. In her 1999 work *Dreaming by the Book* Scarry analyzes the ways in which authors direct the visual imaginations of their readers; with examples ranging from Homer to Proust, Scarry catalogues the mechanisms of directed imaging. She notes, for example, that authors often have readers superimpose hard-to-imagine visions on more easily imageable visions, such as a flying spear on its moving shadow (the weightless shadow is easier to "move," mentally); this direction helps readers visualize the scene more. Scarry's work

does not identify formal features of texts, but rather focuses on higher-order authorial procedures, culled mainly from novels; Scarry assumes that readers visualize, and focuses on how authors enable vivid images rather than how texts encourage imagery at the most fundamental level. Nonetheless *Dreaming by the Book* offers a strong precedent on the question of how texts promote visualization. Together, the works of Esrock and Scarry suggest that after a long period of disavowal, literary critics are beginning to take up the issue of mental imagery again.

Theoretical Commitments

This project investigates visualization as a reader response, but as a response sensitive to and encouraged by specific features of the text. Thus this investigation calls upon theoretical principles and interests from both reader-centered and formalist approaches to literature; the study straddles the line between psychological and literary accounts in order to fully examine the phenomenon of literary-inspired visualization. The interaction of material text and interpretive mind is crucial.

This study contends that mental imagery arises as part of the dynamic interaction of textual form and interpretive response. The interaction is "dynamic" in that it is never formulaic or guaranteed; no textual iteration will *always* lead to mental imagery, and no readers will form *exactly* the same images as other readers (or even in their own minds from reading to reading). The text does not determine the precise nature or even the sheer occurrence of its readers' images. Nonetheless, within this dynamic interaction certain principles of literary visualization obtain; that is, certain features of the text increase the likelihood of mental imagery within

readers; the particular textual characteristics that solicit mental images are the subjects of this study.

Certainly, the attempt to strictly define what counts as a formal feature of a text will meet with epistemological trouble. For instance, if one considers metaphor a formal feature, one must acknowledge that recognizing metaphor depends on semantic analysis; if a metaphor is (or presupposes) a literal falsity or a "category mistake," one must have recourse to meanings in order to catch the disjunction between terms. By this account, a metaphor is a formal feature based on semantic interpretation. If one takes the harder line on formal features, however, and uses structure alone as the determiner, the category of formal features quickly shrinks to a tiny plot, and even here structure often must be determined by the reader. For instance, many stanzaic forms depend on the reader to account for rhyme, and many rhymes ask the reader to make a judgment call about phonological similarity; do "could" and "soot" count as rhymes? Even with sheer stanzaic form, then, a structural analysis often depends upon the reader's aural or oral interpretation. Structure seems to be determined by interpretation at nearly every level of accounting, and thus even a structural accounting of form can rarely isolate features "in" the text. Syllabic structures and counts are often ambiguous, too; perhaps only punctuation would be spared the necessity of readerly involvement.

Given the vastly reduced results of the parsimonious structural account of formal features, most literary critics treat the notion of form more loosely, as an opposition to content and specific meaning. That is, a metaphor is a formal feature in that it denotes a *type* of language use (one admittedly dependent on semantic parsing) rather than any particular meaning. By this measure, four of the five textual characteristics studied (concreteness, parataxis, image metaphor, free verse) qualify as formal features; they are *types* of language use rather than language defined

by content or meaning. In addition, metaphors can be abstracted as structures, filled in by any number of different content words. By this standard, just three of the four (parataxis, image metaphor, free verse) can be abstracted as structures; concreteness is a non-structural type of language use. Thus four of the five features of this study are variously formal, depending on the rigor of one's rubric for form. (The fifth feature, visual prompting, relies on the content and reference of sight-related words, so by even the most accepting measure this feature does not count as formal.)

This project holds that the dominant account of formal features by 20th century critics, especially the New Critics, needs revision. That is, the New Critics read many textual features as inherent "in" the text, as integral parts of the textual object; the reader's task is to find and account for these preexisting elements. Yet many of these ostensibly formal features depend on the reader's interpretation for their very existence. Consider irony and ambiguity, two stars in the New Critic exegetical pantheon — both are determined according to the reader's critical accounting; both take place, if anywhere, in the reader's mind. According to the account above, they might qualify as types of language use but they cannot be abstracted as structures, so they are formal only in the weakest, most generous sense of the term.

More importantly, the supposed formality of these features (irony and ambiguity) exposes a key contradiction in the New Critical paradigm: why are these features formal and "in" the text while mental imagery (or perhaps, more precisely, imageable language) is not? After all, irony and ambiguity depend for their very existence on the critical acuity of a reader, just as mental imagery depends on that reader's synthesis of visual cues; both are realized in the reader's mind. By this light, if we accept I. A. Richards's stern determination that the reader, not the text, creates mental images ("Those who want pictures in their poems must put them in themselves")

we should also accept that the reader is responsible for irony. If the fact of critical interpretation locates visual images outside the poem, then critical interpretation should situate irony as extra-textual as well: perhaps those who want irony in their poems must put it in themselves, too. Alternatively, as another way to keep the critical system consistent, one might consider mental imagery, like irony and ambiguity, a formal feature in an extremely loose sense of the term. Yet either way (irony as extra-textual or mental imagery as formal) the similarities between the cue-driven mental synthesis of images and the cue-driven mental synthesis of irony demand that their separation in critical frameworks be reconsidered.

This project is more psychological than historical in its approach. That is, the specific historical moment of Imagism is less important to the study than the ways in which Imagist poetry interacts with the reader's mind. Certainly, this project admits that the status of the visual imagination is strongly shaped by the historical situation – we have already noted the baneful influence of behaviorism on the study of mental imagery in literature. But this historical situation is important context, not the object of study itself; the banishment of visualization from literary analysis may help to justify and authorize this study, but it does not constitute it. The true focus here is on the interaction of text and reader.

This reader, one might say, is an abstraction, a personification of statistical averages. Drawing as it does on numerous empirical studies of language use and mental imagery, this project implicitly claims that certain textual features exert discernable, probabilistic forces. The notion of the reader gets caught up in these probabilities. While one must admit that the purely average, indexical reader does not exist, one must also acknowledge that psychological studies involve real people and thus help designate tendencies of actual readers. In other words, "the reader" may be an abstraction, but an abstraction derived from real readers. Further, this project

examines how aspects of texts, not particular psychological profiles of readers, inform visualization; the study focuses more on how the text solicits visualization from an average reader than on the specific mental attributes of high visualizers. The notion of the average reader establishes a broad empirical context that can help identify the influence of specific textual features.

Finally, because this project brings psychological research into the fold of literature, it makes claims for the value of interdisciplinary methodologies, and offers a feature-centered model that links literature, psychology, and cognitive science. This study begins with the premise that different disciplines produce expertise that, though specific and often esoteric, can productively inform other areas of study. Carbon dating can add to the art historian's knowledge; sociological statistics can deepen seismological analysis; and principles from physics (such as the fundamental "uncertainty" of electrons) can help structure postmodern critical theory. This study puts interdisciplinarity into practice, and cites relevant expertise from psychological and neurological studies toward a better understanding of both Imagism proper and mental imagery within literature in general.

The Literary Image, Seen and Unseen

The (Nervously Guarded) Literary Image

In order to begin the process of discussing Imagism and its relation to mental imagery, we must first clarify that loaded word at the root of the movement: the "image." What does the image mean within literary studies? What within or outside of a text counts as an image? And more specifically, does the Imagist version of the image match up with the general literary sense of the word? To what extent does the term rely on its visual connotations?

The term "image" is a particularly slippery word, even in general usage. According to the *American Heritage Dictionary*, the term denotes a reproduction of an object's form, whether sculptural or optical; a close resemblance; a publicly-held concept or reputation; a personification of something; "a mental picture of something not real or present"; a vivid description; a figure of speech. Abstruse applications for mathematics ("a set of values of a function") and computer science (a cross-medium duplication of data) also exist.

The "mental picture" definition is the one that registers the process of visualization. The *OED* offers an expanded version of this sense by making the visual charge a probability, but not a limiting feature: "A mental representation of something (esp. a visible object), not by direct perception, but by memory or imagination; a mental picture or impression; an idea, conception. Also, with qualifying adj.: a mental representation due to any of the senses (not only sight) and to organic sensations." The "image" is both more widespread across the senses (an olfactory image) and more vague (a "conception"). Nonetheless, this definition retains the essential aspect of mental representation without immediate perceptual stimulation. The *OED* notes that this sense of the term dates back to the fourteenth century, to Chaucer.

In specifically literary usage, the word means fewer things overall, but the meanings are quite slippery and even confusingly interdependent. The entry in the *Princeton Handbook of Poetic Terms* (1986) exemplifies this characteristic fluidity, so its treatment of the term deserves some close attention. The *Handbook* defines the "image" through its psychological sense ("the reproduction in the mind of a sensation produced by physical perception"), and quickly demonstrates the relevance of literature to this definition: "More specifically in literary usage, *imagery* refers to images produced in the mind by language, whose words and statements may refer either to experiences which would produce physical perceptions were the reader actually to have those experiences, or to the sense-impressions themselves." In other words, the linguistic stimulus prompts a certain mental transformation in the reader, whether through referred experiences or sensations. One should note that the logic here is slightly tricky: the language may denote experiences that would produce actual *perceptions* in the reader, but the link between those hypothetical perceptions and the relevant mental representations of them is unclear. The language may suggest certain experiences, but do those experiences translate automatically into mental images? Moving back a step, do the words necessarily produce images? The authors suggest that they do, but they do not assert it outright. This looseness – or rather, this inability to say for sure that a chain of reader inferences leads straight through to reader imagery – is typical of imagery discussions.

The *Princeton Handbook* divides imagery into three principal meanings: mental imagery, figures of speech, and image patterns "as the embodiment of 'symbolic vision' or of 'non-discursive truth'" (93). According to the authors, the first definition concerns psychological effects in the reader's mind, while the other two target the evocative language (the cause) itself. Yet the vague third category, "symbolic imagery," is less about language than

about the interpretation of language. The authors attempt to mask this hermeneutical aspect through authorial agency ("Thus Arnold in 'Dover Beach' converts the scene into a symbol as follows…"[97]) yet the reader clearly must do the work of this conversion. Symbolic imagery, a reading of authorial "vision" or larger "truth," is less a cause than an effect. At base, the third definition still derives from the mental representations in the reader's mind (definition 1), representations which the reader may, if so inspired, place within an external symbolic frame. Then again, however, mental imagery itself may depend on interpretation: surely not all images are involuntary, many require effort to produce, and all call upon embedded ways of rendering the world. These complications (stemming from another moment of logical looseness) suggest again that discussions of imagery are particularly susceptible to causal ambiguity.

The second definition is clearly linguistic, however. The *Handbook* spends considerable space working through various taxonomies of rhetorical figures, but the relation between figurative language and the primary sense of mental representation is never made explicit. The most suggestive claim is negative: the entry notes that one need not visualize figures of speech in order to capture their meanings. Eliot's "patient etherized upon a table" may suggest many sensory images: "the sickly sweet smell of the anaesthetic, the feeling of numbness, the buzzing in the ears…." (One might note that the authors give many rich images here, and also that they offer them with definite articles [e.g., "*the* buzzing in the ears"], as if those images are given, essential features of the scene. These factors slightly undercut the proposed extraneousness of their offered images.) The writers then make their stand: "but to *understand* that this image is one of half-life, half-death, of suspended animation which is the symbol of spiritual debility…need not of necessity require any such effort" (94). That is, the simile can mean "spiritual debility" whether or not the reader forms images for it. In a larger sense (and one

suggested by the suspicious overabundance of details ascribed to the patient), this negative principle actually suggests a positive claim, that mental imagery is a fundamental poetic effect. It is so fundamental, in fact, that one might need to be reminded that comprehension "need not of necessity require" – note the two levels of repudiation – the use of mental imagery. In other words, while the *Handbook* does not assert that linguistic figuration produces mental imagery, its very straining against this (ostensibly popular) idea does suggest such a relation. The first two senses of "imagery" are thus linked by the assumption that figurative language is likely to produce mental imagery.

The latest version of the reference book, the 1993 *New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, does admit what the earlier version only implicitly demonstrated: that the "image" is a confusing, interrelated set of things. The *Encyclopedia* notes in its first sentence of the "image" entry that "image and imagery are among the most widely used and poorly understood terms in poetic theory, occurring in so many contexts it may well be impossible to provide any rational, systematic account of their usage" (556). The editors also include a generous nod to cognitive psychologists, noting that despite the "considerable resistance" to thinking of visualization as a proper subject for literary work, "mental imagery has taken on a whole new life in the work of post-behavioral cognitive psychology" (558). Further, in a moment of apparent leveling and interdependence, the *Encyclopedia* recommends that literary critics become conversant with the discoveries of cognitive psychologists on the issue, and in turn that psychologists take into account the cultural history that literary critics examine.

Despite these concessions to confusion and literary-psychological interdependence, however, the *Encyclopedia* manages to set out a version of imagery that clearly privileges text over reader, and hermeneutics over mental imagery. Indeed, the editors broaden imagery well

past figuration, and declare that it includes any salient textual objects: "Imagery may be, in the first place, the speaker's subject…Such subjects are, roughly speaking, people, places, objects, actions, and events" (564). These objects are elevated to a strangely hallowed subset of imagery, "the literal imagery of subject" (564). The word "literal" suggests that these objects are true and transparent on the page; they require little, if any, interpretation. Mental imagery, unlike this "literal," in-the-text set of objects, exists behind and after these objects; mental imagery only happens after we understand the objects and then decide to image them: "As for mental imagery, we may if we choose visualize the scene" (564). In other words, according to this account the textual, lexical imagery is transparent and immediate, while the reader's mental imagery is post-hoc and deliberate.

Perhaps needless to say, the *Encyclopedia* creates a double standard here: poetic objects are automatically and effortlessly understood, but only imaged with significant and time-consuming effort. Certainly, this may be true at low levels of thinking (one can probably understand something of the word "cat" before imaging one), but the editors also apply this standard to higher orders of thinking, like affective interpretation. At this level the editors mask this double standard by discarding the reader; consider their treatment of poetic "externalization," a version of the objective correlative: "It [imagery] may, in the first place, serve as a device for externalizing and making vivid the speaker's thoughts and feelings" (565). The reader, and more importantly, the reader's interpretation, is absent here; imagery seems to magically externalize the speaker's feeling on its own; imagery seems to be a self-powered "device." However, once one acknowledges that the speaker only gains thought and feelings through the reader's interpretation of the poetic objects, the hermeneutical double standard becomes clear. In fact, the poetic objects require the reader's cognitive intervention (or effort) to

take root either as a semantic interpretation or a mental image; one "works" both to ascribe emotional significance to and to image the poem's objects. By this light, the editors' attempt to separate out a deliberate, post-hoc mental imagery from the transparent, immediately understood "literal" word makes little sense. Yet of course such a separation corresponds well to the general disregard for mental imagery from many 20th century literary critics, a group that has tried to keep the literary image purely textual and "unseen."

The *Encyclopedia* declares that the literary value of mental imagery is at best middling: "the disadvantages…almost outweigh its advantages" (560). Typically, and true to the logic just analyzed, the editors support this diagnosis by separating mental imagery from other modes of literary interpretation. They write (sounding like I.A. Richards) that the variety of imagery capacities of readers poses an "insoluble methodological problem" and leads to critical inaccuracy: "the attempt to describe the imagination of a poet is inextricably bound up with the imagination of the critic who analyzes it" (560). That is, critics able to image the poetry only through their own cognitive filters and capacities put their own imaginative stamp on the poet's writing. Yet this is also true of any other type of criticism – if the critic analyzes irony in Marvell, for instance, Marvell's irony will soon become wrapped up in the critic's reading of irony: the critic's definition and boundaries for the figure, the critic's capacity to "see" irony, the critic's past textual experience with irony. The same is true for other objects of interpretation (ambiguity, honor, poetic rhythm): criticism begins at home. To chastise and even disqualify mental imagery for this reason is to unfairly separate it from other interpretive models. The editors also note that a focus on mental imagery can easily distract the critic from meaning and feeling in the poem, or the function of the images(560). These objections play on the worst-case scenario of the mental imagery approach. Obviously enough, any method applied too

excessively or bluntly will harm the object of study; fears about a potential misuse of an interpretive approach should not disqualify the method in question. The *Encyclopedia* attempts to quarantine mental imagery from other critical approaches, but the symptoms that are charged solely to mental imagery could well take the rest of literary interpretation with it.

The Imagist Image

The Imagists themselves produced even more complicated and confusing treatments of the term. Pound's famous definition - "that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time" ("A Few Don'ts" 200) – is surprisingly non-visual. Here he stresses presentation (i.e., poetic creation) over representation, and instantaneity over process. As such Pound calls attention to philosophical questions of artistic representation rather than what, exactly, the image is. An image seems to be a mode of idealized reader response – an epiphany – rather than, as might be assumed by the name, a subset of ekphrasis.

The term "image" served the Imagists in many ways, but perhaps principally as its icon of formal prohibition, or what Kenner has called "technical hygiene." As Pound wrote in *Gaudier-Brzeska*, "the 'image' is the furthest possible remove from rhetoric" (83). Thus in this definition the image rejects all the ungainly, bloated aspects of rhetoric that the Imagists routinely blasted in their policy statements: abstractions, clichés, stilted verse forms, and archaic syntactical inversions. The definition cannily relies on negation without asserting the actual province of the term.

Such vagueness was at work from the beginning: the first printed reference (in 1912) to "Les Imagistes," in Pound's preface to Hulme's five poems that he appended to his own *Ripostes*, names them as the artistic heirs of "the forgotten school of 1909" — the "School of

Images" that "may or may not have existed" (59). Such obscurity (with its attendant intellectual exclusivity and appeal) attached to the image as well. Flint's ostensibly instructive note on "Imagisme" in the March 1913 issue of *Poetry* tantalized students of the image with more declarations without definitions: "They held also a certain 'Doctrine of the Image,' which they had not committed to writing" (199). The Imagist refusal to identify this key term is (brazenly) presented as a public good: "they said that it [the Doctrine of the Image] did not concern the public, and would provoke useless public discussion" (199). Pound further increased the mystery with his inscrutable assertion that the image is "the word beyond formulated language" (*GB* 88). Perhaps needless to say, these treatments of the term, while provocative, revealed very little about the actual face or mechanisms of the "image." As Tiffany wryly notes about Pound (but applicable to most Imagists who proposed a definition of the image), "Pound's attempts to define the Image violate the basic principles of Imagism (economy, precision, clarity). Not only is he unable to offer a literal definition of the Image, but the figurative analogies multiple with remarkable fecundity and obscurity" (44).

Only adding to this confusion is the question of number: through the logic of Hulme's Bergsonian poetic philosophy, the image - whatever that is - also came to refer to the intuitive leap produced by a surprising comparison of multiple images. In effect, the "image" could refer to both one image and two images in one, a combination. According to Hulme's translation of Bergson's *Introduction to Metaphysics*, "Many diverse images, borrowed from very different orders of things, may, by the convergence of their action, direct consciousness to the precise point where there is a certain intuition to be seized" (16). Such intuition, according to Bergson, overthrows the tyranny of analysis, the "relative" process of seeing an object in terms of something else; he employs a physical metaphor of entering into an object rather than fecklessly

moving around it (1). Intuition commands "absolute" perception, recognition of the object in its own terms. This concept is troubling, of course, in that one can arrive at intuition and absolute perception through a combination of things. (Bergson intimated that the distance between the images creates a "tension" that guards against seeing one in terms of the other.) Yet despite these conceptual difficulties, Hulme stressed a Bergsonian convergence as a way to counteract the stilted conventions of language. Through slippery usage, this convergence also became known as the "image." As Gage notes, "The imagists used the word *image* indiscriminately to refer to both the single descriptive phrase and the result of the combination of two such phrases" (13).

Though confusing through negation and numerical promiscuity, the image was offered up most forcefully as a measure of direct experience. Flint's first rule in "Imagisme" demanded "Direct treatment of the 'thing' whether subjective or objective" (199). Pound wrote that "an *image*, in our sense, is real because we know it directly" (*GB* 86). The notion of directness refers back to presentation ("presents an intellectual and emotional complex…"), and asserts that the image hands over experience to the reader rather than merely providing a record of that experience. In other words, the image creates in the reader the very feeling that the poet experienced.

Hulme wrote that successful poetry "is not a counter language, but a visual, concrete one. It is a compromise for a language of intuition which would hand over sensations bodily" (*S* 134). The subjunctive mood of the final clause is key here: a "language of intuition" does not exist, and sensations can not be transferred automatically between people. Rather, the medium of poetry, with its linguistic emphasis on concrete experience (rather than mere symbolic "counters," or variables), enables the reader to recreate the sensation that the poet directly

produces. Hulme in fact considered poetry to be the direct, new language of images, while prose – "a museum where all the weapons of poetry [are] kept" (*FS* 81) – was poetry that had lost its power and expressiveness through convention. He writes, "There are, roughly speaking, two methods of communication, a direct, and a conventional language. The direct language is poetry, it is direct because it deals in images. The indirect language is prose, because it uses images that have died and become figures of speech" (*FS* 74). Though Hulme's metaphors for the fatal progression of language may confuse the issue (i.e., If placed in a museum, how are the relics of poetry ever handled enough to become pathetically conventional?), it is clear that he founds his poetic theory on the directness of images.

The hallmarks of the "image," then, seem to be its negative, anti-rhetorical platform and its purported ability to reveal its object directly to the reader. The image may be either single or a combination of items. But what items, and what form do they take? These questions are left alone. For better or worse, by the definitions of the Imagists the image seems to be most importantly a catalyst of textual effects within the reader: a sudden awareness of an object or emotion, an experience recreated and felt. The Imagists do not detail the specific form of the image – whether a verbal description, a scene visualized in the reader's mind, or some combination of the two. The definitions simply assert that the image transforms the reader instantly by generating experience, and the definitions thus provide little insight into the question of visualization. We have no hard evidence that the Imagists thought of "the image" as a visual image within the reader's mind.

At the same time, however, Imagist poetics – both in "official" propaganda pieces and related philosophical tracts – is shot through with strong claims about seeing and vision. Hulme proclaimed: "This new verse appeals to the eye rather than to the ear. It has to mold images, a kind of spiritual clay, into definite shapes" (*FS* 75). Certainly, in this version, the metaphor of spiritual clay moderates what might be a purely visual conception of the image, and suggests a more tactile sense. Yet all the same, such clay must be formed into shapes that the eye can take in. Hulme went even further in claiming that the new poetry should be visually-oriented; he wrote in his notes that "each *word* must be an image *seen*" and explained it thus: "A man cannot write without seeing at the same time a visual signification before his eyes. It is this image which precedes the writing and makes it firm" (79). Hulme expresses the urgent relation between word and mental imagery through his absolutist grammar ("must be," "cannot write without"), and he reinforces this urgency visually through his pressing italics. In addition, Hulme's discussion of the plural image takes visual form, too: his shorthand for the Bergsonian convergence of images (which confusingly becomes its own image) was a "visual chord" (*FS* 73), as if visual images could be laid on top of each other and then seen as one.

In their published statements, the Imagists propagated a call for clarity, urging "poetry that is hard and clear, never blurred nor indefinite" (*1915* vii). Certainly, the blurriness they refer to was primarily linguistic – all those syntactical inversions and stilted euphony to be replaced by precision – but at the same time, the lurking optical metaphor obtains, suggesting in an important way the visual register. Following up on this rule, Amy Lowell solidifies the Imagist interest in visuality with an explicitly eye-oriented explanation; again, this appeal to the eye takes on a primarily negative form. She writes, "Imagists fear the blurred effect of a too

constant change of picture in the same poem" (*Tendencies* 246). Here the blurriness is obviously visual, almost photographic, as if Imagists court poetic ruin by moving their mental cameras while capturing a scene. Instead, the "picture" that the poem presents must remain relatively stable and coherent.

Pound, too, gets quite explicit about the poem's visual charge. Indeed, in his canonical "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste," he claims that what can be visually imagined by readers will be the most durable aspect of the poem: "That part of your poetry which strikes upon the imaginative *eye* of the reader will lose nothing by translation into a foreign tongue" (205). In this view, the visualized image prompted by the poem transcends the specific linguistic cues that brought it into being; the imagery can withstand radical code-switching and still produce the same visual experience. At base, for our purposes, Pound's focus on the reader's "imaginative eye" demonstrates a powerful interest in the reader's response of mental imagery, and asserts that this imagery happens. In addition, the implicit claim that visualization is a particularly powerful textual effect suggests that Imagist poets should work to elicit imagery in their readers.

Pound in fact codified this visual aspect of poetry within his structural poetics. His scheme recognizes three parts: melopoeia (the "musical property" of sound and rhythm), logopoeia (the conceptual associations generated by words), and phanopoeia, the visual element. Pound in fact characterizes phanopoeia actively, as the "casting of images upon the visual imagination" (*LE* 25). Images do not just appear in the reader's imagination; rather, they are generated deliberately by the poem and as such given to the reader, lodged in the reader's mind. Pound's definition implies a sort of projection, as if the phanopoeic poem beams images onto the screen of the reader's mind. The reader passively receives these images; the poem has exerted the active work of sending the images to the reader.

Significantly, Pound associates Imagism most strongly with phanopoeia – he even uses them synonymously. Arguing for a vital, moving Imagist object rather than a static still-life, Pound declares, "If you can't think of imagism or phanopoeia as including the moving image, you will have to make a really needless division of fixed image and praxis, or action" (Kenner 57). This revealing apposition suggests that, to Pound at least, the practice of Imagism is very close to the practice of casting visual experience onto the reader's mind. While Pound often emphasized the musical elements of poetry (poetry is "a composition of words set to music" [*LE* 437]), his use of the synonymous "or" structure here indicates a confidence in declaring mental imagery central to Imagism proper.

One can perhaps get the clearest sense of Imagism's visual aspects negatively – that is, in the Imagist determination to be more than just visual. In the preface to the 1916 edition, for example, they hold: "In the first place 'Imagism' does not mean merely the presentation of pictures. 'Imagism' refers to the manner of presentation, not the subject" (*1916* v). The compulsion to clarify this issue indicates the extent to which the reading public associated the movement with verbal pictures. The Imagist propaganda machine had to ward off such a fatal oversimplification and maintain the cachet of obscurity; otherwise, the Imagists risked seeming "merely" pictorial. What is important, though, is that the Imagists so convinced the reading public of their visual, ekphrastic charge that they had to declare a more complex poetics.

Why did the leading Imagist theorists advance such a visual poetics? In part, as I have suggested, because the sense of sight makes notions of linguistic clarity more physically approachable. That is, in seeing something the distinction between clarity and blurriness is obvious, so sight becomes an appropriate vehicle for concerns about imprecise language. The visual register may have helped the Imagists dismiss their genteel poetic forerunners more

powerfully, while at the same time providing them with a rich yet basic metaphor: understanding is seeing.

On another, related level, however, the crucial aspect of visuality is its speed. According to Bergson's philosophy (that Hulme readily steeped himself in and promoted), the temporal "flux" of action distorts perception by making things relational. One cannot perceive the truth of objects in time; the flux of action and motion prevents one from seeing an object on its own terms, as an "absolute" perception. To Bergson, one can only experience things absolutely if one can isolate them in time, separate them from the relational flow. Vision seems to offer such immediacy. Hulme writes that poetry "always endeavours to arrest you, and make you continuously see a physical thing, to prevent you from gliding through an abstract process" (*S* 134). Here vision "arrests" the reader (even if that seeing is continuous), and penetrates the abstract flow. Gage sums it up: "It was the necessity to escape action that drew the imagists to the pictorial arts for their model of presentation. Things are apprehended 'instantly' through vision, and vision thus became the principal sense to which this poetry must appeal" (14). If the poet could make the reader "see" the object, then the object could be wrenched away from the flow of time and grasped more purely.

It is pretty clear, then, that the logic and practice of vision and imagery strongly underwrite the poetics of Imagism. The Imagists employed the rhetoric of sight and visualization to stake many of their philosopho-poetic principles. I claim that their poems, growing out of these principles, actively solicit visualization as a reader response.

This premise must be qualified in two ways. First, as already noted, some readers will *not* experience mental imagery, despite the multiple ways in which the poetry encourages this as a response. No poetry can determine the specific modes of reader response. Second, Imagist poetry is of course not *exclusively* visual in its appeal. Though I am claiming a special, privileged role for visual imagery within Imagist poetry, I must acknowledge at the outset that visual imagery is not the only type of imagery solicited by the poems – other senses are targeted, too.

Consider the first two stanzas of Aldington's "Field Manoeuvres (Outpost Duty)" in terms of sensations aroused:

> The long autumn grass beneath my body
> Soaks my clothes in dew;
> Where my knees press into the ground
> I can feel the damp earth.
>
> In my nostrils is a smell of crushed grass,
> Wet pine-cones and bark. (*1917* 8)

Clearly, the first stanza evokes tactile sensations; the second, olfactory ones. Certainly, the stanzas also call up visual images – the scene – but non-visual images dominate. The speaker's pressure against the ground, his dew-soaked clothing, and his explicit comment that he can "feel the damp earth" combine towards a strong sense of bodily feeling. While the next stanza's specific recipe of smells may be hard for the reader to form an olfactory image of (either one by

one or in combination), the very itemization of these smells evokes a particular, local setting through the speaker's attention to environmental cues.

James Joyce's sole contribution to the Imagist oeuvre, "I Hear an Army," appeared in the *Des Imagistes* volume of 1914. Much as the title suggests, it calls upon the ear to register its effects. The first two stanzas read:

I hear an army charging upon the land,
And the thunder of horses plunging; foam about their knees:
Arrogant, in black armour, behind them stand,
Disdaining the reins, with fluttering whips, the Charioteers.

They cry into night their battle name:
I moan in sleep when I hear afar their whirling laughter.
They cleave the gloom of dreams, a blinding flame,
Clanging, clanging upon the heart as upon an anvil. (*1914* 40)

The speaker is quite explicit about having several experiences of hearing, although the sounds that he describes ("the thunder of horses plunging," "their whirling laughter") are not so precise. Yet still, even though the poem does not describe the sounds so explicitly, the reader might mentally hear the dull thudding of hundreds of hooves pounding against the earth: the "thunder of horses." Other moments are clearly more visually-oriented: "foam about their knees," "fluttering whips," "a blinding flame." The second stanza ends, however, with a strong evocation of "clanging" sound. In fact, the repetition of "clanging" serves to perform (at least in caricature) the sound and suggests that (in the absence of a specific object) something deep and

resonant is striking the anvil. Though the unknown object actually strikes the heart, not the anvil, the simile provides the rich aural image that is vital to the poetic experience.

Imagist poetry often appeals to non-visual senses, but further, some moments prove strikingly hard to visualize *even though* they seem to appeal to the visual imagination itself. That is, these moments seem to be visual, but they do not lend themselves easily to this mode; in fact, they resist it. Consider these lines from Aldington's "Bondage":

> I have been a spendthrift —
>
> Dropping from lazy fingers
>
> Quiet colored hours,
>
> Fluttering away from me
>
> Like oak and beech leaves in October. (*1917* 5)

One may easily picture leaves fluttering toward the ground, even dropped from one's hands, but the target of the simile is not so easy to picture: what do "quiet colored hours" look like as they languidly drop to the earth? Even the modifiers here are hard to parse: are the hours "quiet-colored" or quiet and colored? If the first, what color denotes low volume? If the second, we have even less information to go on to determine what color the hours might be. The bigger question is what the hours themselves look like as objects. We might assume retrospectively, looking back from the completed simile, that they are leaf-like, but we might also follow the economic interest ("spendthrift") and imagine dropping coins or paper money. At any rate, these questions demonstrate a particular obscurity here, despite the fact that the fluttering leaves urge the reader to visually imagine the hours dropping from the speaker's fingers.

To take another example, consider the first stanza of H.D.'s well-known and much anthologized "Hermes of the Ways":

The hard sand breaks

And the grains of it

Are clear as wine (*1914* 21)

The common feature of the sand and the wine, clarity, encourages the reader to mentally see how both are clear, to put them in visual relation. But while it is easy to visualize the clarity of wine, it is much harder to visualize the clarity of sand, especially in light of the wine. That is, sand may be clear for the distinct separation of its grains, a sense of individual articulation. But the poem's comparison to wine solicits another rendering of clarity; wine is clear not because it is distinctly articulated, but because it is translucent. Sand cannot be clear in this way. The comparison may even encourage some readers to imagine sand swirling in a glass like wine, but the physical realities of sand (i.e., its opacity) quickly stifle this impetus, or at least do not reward it very much. Perhaps this very frustration leads J.B. Harmer to declare that this image "is hardly acceptable in visual or any other terms" and to suggest that H.D. has replaced Imagist directness with Symbolist vagueness (48). Without following Harmer so far in his assertions, one can agree that her lines above do not easily appear in the visual imagination, despite their subtle appeal to it.

Such a critique appeared publicly in a withering contemporary review of Imagism. Starting September 18, 1915 and continuing in three more weekly installments, the Chicago *Evening Post* published a brutal critique of Imagism by Professor William Leonard of the University of Wisconsin. Leonard lambasted many aspects of Imagism, including its appeal to the exotic, its allusiveness, and the triviality of its conceits. What seemed to really irritate Leonard, however, was the Imagist's implicit claim to stronger, more acute perception, an ability to perceive the sublime in the small; as he satirized, "Imagists, doubtless, hear things more

wonderful than Beethoven's symphonies in the buzz of the mosquito on the flats back of Chicago, and they whiff more than all the perfumes of Arabia in the summer steam of a Jersey dunghill" (Hughes 56).

Such (alleged) pretense to perceptual acuity inflamed Leonard because he felt that the images in Imagist poetry often failed to corroborate this deeper, more intense perception. According to Leonard, many images were inconsistent, and could not be easily visualized; such inconsistency thus undermined the Imagist claim to sharp perception. Leonard offered some lines from Lawrence's "Green" as an example:

> The sky was green wine held up in the sun.
>
> The moon was a golden petal between — (*1915* 78)

Leonard claims that the visual inconsistency here "is as old as the first muddlehead, and may be paralleled by the examples listed from all second-rate literature in the old-fashioned 'Principles of Rhetoric'" (Hughes 57). Leonard probably chalked this example under his maxim "The Imagists can't see straight"; we must note, though, that he had other places to locate Lawrence's inconsistency (they also can't "feel," "think," or "talk" straight.)

Leonard found the Imagists most galling for this failure to live by their name and produce strong, legible images. As he lamented, or perhaps scorned, "Of all writers Imagists might be expected not to violate the two simplest maxims of making images — that the given image should be capable of actual visualization, and that its parts should hang together" (Hughes 56). To Leonard, images like Lawrence's in "Green" violate these maxims, and thus expose the falseness of Imagism's name and essential promise. If lines of poetry cannot be visualized, they cannot be presenting true images, and the poetry should not be called Imagism.

So: for two big and different reasons, Imagist poetry does not always produce visual imagery; like most poems, Imagist poems often appeal to many different senses and also often frustrate the visual impulse. But our question here concerns visual imagery as a reader response, and therefore this response will be analyzed with particular scrutiny. Such scrutiny does not implicitly deny that other types of imagery (or, for that matter, other modes of interpretation) are present and important, nor does it assert that all visual cues produce visualizable images; rather, this project engages with one sensory mode with the constant awareness that other modes and models (and visual "failures") are also present, but that the design and scope of the study does not permit sustained attention to them. In other words, this project investigates only visualization as a response to Imagist poetry, but this narrowness does not void all other modes of response – it is rather a matter of necessary focus.

Given that focus is not blindness, we can move forward. The question now turns to how the visual principles articulated within the Imagist program take root through Imagist poetic practices. What features of Imagist poetry encourage visual imagery? Are these features especially prominent within Imagism as opposed to other types of poetry? What features of Imagist poetry, if any, discourage mental imagery?

The features of the Imagist program are best culled from a sort of poetic middle ground, the space between the strict prescriptions of Imagist policy and the looser structures of actual poems. After all, the strict Imagist guidelines (in prose) set out by various movement publicists should not necessarily be the litmus test for Imagism; poetic movements are always looser in practice. As Pound noted, just as Imagism was taking flight, "To belong to a school does not in the least mean that one writes poetry to a theory. One writes poetry when, where, because, and as one feels like writing it. A school exists when two or three young men agree, more or less, to

call certain things good" ("Status Rerum" 126). And while Amy Lowell claimed that the Imagists were "united by certain principles" (*1915* vi) and Ford Madox Ford wrote with retrospective authority that Imagism "had something of permanency in its principles and…its practitioners worked sedulously according to those lights" (*1930* 18), not all poems register these principles, and some poems obviously flout them. Deviations from the rules are inevitable (and often artistically progressive). At the same time, poems that stray *too* far from the generally accepted program threaten to capsize the entire enterprise, and the prescriptions can offer some ballast in these cases. The rules can help determine what should count as an Imagist poem. So: not every rule should be taken as poetic fact, but the rules can help mark the artistic boundaries of the movement. The tension here is productive: the specific poems provide a living balance to the strictness of the prescriptions, and the prescriptions should help check the influence of any outlying poetic examples. It is within this poetic "middle ground" that the textual features will be investigated.

Concreteness

We will begin with the notion of concreteness, a fundamental Imagist principle. Imagist poetics demanded concrete language for its vitality and clarity, and Ezra Pound even declared a strong tie to visualization under the category *phanopoeia*. A bit more subtly, Imagist poetics asserted that concrete language could effectively couch the original emotions of the poet and obviate explicit sentiment. Psychological research on concrete language has confirmed many of the Imagists' ardent suppositions: concrete words produce stronger, more vivid images than abstract words, and the concrete words produce these images faster than abstract words. In addition, neurological data suggests that concrete words are processed differently than abstract words; further, some research has found that the comprehension of concrete nouns involves the brain's visual processing areas. Though the link between concrete language and emotion is looser, one study of reading patterns does indicate that imagery (which is produced most readily by concrete language) and affect are linked. Finally, this chapter concludes with two potential challenges to the value of concrete language – the case of the "overly" concrete and negated diction – in order to assess its limitations.

The Poetics of Concreteness

The Imagist program calls for concrete diction under the mantle of "Precision," an early "watchword" that Pound set in opposition to the "dull and interminable effusions" of cliché-riddled writers ("Status Rerum" 126). The attitude takes more exacting form as one of the famous "Don'ts": "Go in fear of abstractions" (201). In fact Pound nearly equates the image and concrete language when he writes, "Don't use such an expression as 'dim lands of *peace*'. It

dulls the image. It mixes an abstraction with the concrete" ("A Few Don'ts" 201). Here an unspoken sense of purity underwrites concrete language – to place it next to abstract language is to degrade it, and the image it helps create. (One might argue, in contrast, that it is the fact of mixing and not abstract language in particular that "dulls the image," but given the specification that abstractions should be feared, this contrary reading seems quite farfetched. It makes more sense that what is to be avoided and what dulls the all-important image are the same thing.) More generally, the emphasis on precise language was perhaps the vanguard of Imagism's so-called technical hygiene, the urge to rid poetry of bloated, vague, abstract language. The first rule of Imagism in the 1915 preface demanded common, yet exact language: "To use the language of common speech, but to employ always the exact word, not the nearly-exact, nor the merely decorative word" (*1915* vi).

A comparison is in order. Let us consider first "Flos Lunae" by Ernest Dowson, a member of the Rhymer's Club who was influenced by French Symbolism. It was written in 1891, and its first stanza reads:

I would not alter thy cold eyes,
Nor trouble the calm fount of speech
With aught of passion or surprise.
The heart of thee I cannot reach:
I would not alter thy cold eyes! (84)

Next to this let us place the first stanza of Aldington's "Eros and Psyche," the first poem in the 1916 Imagist anthology:

In an old dull yard near Camden Town,
Which echoes with the rattle of cars and 'busses

And freight-trains, puffing steam and smoke and dirt

To the steaming, sooty sky –

There stands an old and grimy statue,

A statue of Psyche and her lover, Eros. (*1916* 3)

Aldington's lines seem to generate a picture of a grimy freight-yard, while Dowson's stanza gives the reader little to visualize. Aldington's stanza contains many concrete nouns, and even those (cars, 'busses) that are presented in terms of their sounds can be readily imaged. In contrast, the only concrete nouns in Dowson's section are "heart" and "eyes" – the first used metaphorically to suggest an emotional identity, and the second undercut by a synaesthesia ("cold eyes") that may prove difficult to visualize. (A "fount," or font, is a basin, but here it interacts metaphorically with "speech" to suggest, perhaps, abundant talking.) Verbally, Dowson's stanza works through negations (not altering, not troubling, not reaching) while Aldington, after the echoing and puffing of the dependent clause, provides a stable, almost still-life "stands."

Concrete language has long been regarded as more memorable and visual than abstract language. Writers and readers speak of concrete diction in terms of "showing" a scene rather than abstractly "telling" it; concrete language seems to embed itself in memory more easily than abstract language. Concrete language seems to be the language of choice for creating memorable scenes within a reader's mind.

The Imagists grasped the importance of concrete language. While they most often revealed this understanding generally, through their telling "fear" of abstractions and their body of concrete-driven poetry, Pound in fact outlines a stronger connection between exact, precise language and imagery. He held that exact language was the key element in *phanopoeia*: "In

phanopoeia we find the greatest drive toward utter precision of word; this art exists almost exclusively by it" (*LE* 26). In other words, the "casting of visual images upon the imagination" depends upon precise words for its effects. Certainly, precision is not the same as concreteness (perhaps "pity" is the exact, precise word for the particular context), but given that concrete language specifies sensory content, concrete language generally *feels* more precise than abstract language. While recognizing a certain looseness here, then, we can suggest that Pound's version of *phanopoeia* likely depends in significant part upon concrete, visual language.

The Imagists valorized concreteness not just for its ease of visualization, but also for its links to emotion. That is, though declamatory emotion words were taboo within the Imagist system, concrete words, if properly used, could point to the emotion without explicitly saying it; through concrete language the poet could express an emotional impulse without using the forbidden "comment" words (e.g., happy, wistful). The poet would embody (but not state) the original emotion in a concrete "scene," and (so goes the idea) the reader would intuitively unpack the scene and capture the original emotion.

This process of translation into the concrete is Eliot's famed "objective correlative," outlined in his 1919 essay on *Hamlet*. Eliot defined the term thus: "a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked" (48). In other words, sensory objects correlate with an emotional experience, and the poet invokes the first to evoke the second. This process of translation also had a place within Imagist poetics, though without a catchy technical name. In "A Few Don'ts" Pound uses the standard term "symbol" to claim that the sensory object speaks for more than itself: "the natural object is always the adequate symbol" (201). A bit later, in his "Vorticism" essay, Pound

sketches out a sort of mathematics of mood: "not something about *a*, *b*, and *c*, having something to do with form, but about *sea*, *cliffs*, *night*, having something to do with mood" (*GB* 92). The concrete words here (admittedly, "night" is much less concrete than the others) combine to form a particular scene that itself suggests a larger, opaque mood. In this light we must note again Pound's prohibition of concrete-abstract mixing: "Don't use such an expression as 'dim lands of *peace*'. It dulls the image. It mixes an abstraction with the concrete" ("A Few Don'ts" 201). Here Pound challenges not only the abstraction of "peace," but also its redundancy: the sense of "peace" has already been expressed by the concrete referent, "dim lands," so appending the abstract value is unnecessary. Apparently, the words "dim lands" already indicate or at least gesture towards the idea of peacefulness. (One might easily challenge the obviousness of this gesture; "dim lands" might also suggest anxiety or nostalgia, for example.) Thus in Imagist poetics concrete language served not only as the key player for mental imagery (*phanopoeia*), but also as the linguistic mediator between the poet's original emotion and the reader's interpretation of it.

Psychological Findings: Concreteness, Imageability, Latency

Since the 1960s, research on verbal learning has generated insights into the relation of linguistic abstraction, memory, and visualization. The work of Allan Paivio is particularly important for his finding that concrete language is more memorable than abstract language, and his underlying theory that concrete language achieves this effect through mental imagery. According to Paivio, concrete language is more memorable than abstract language because it is mentally processed ("coded") in two separate ways: in the verbal code and the visual code. Abstract language, by contrast, only makes use of the verbal code.

Paivio's early research is especially useful to the study of Imagism because it forges connections between abstraction and mental imagery, and investigates how those features apply to memory. Paivio's work focused on how easily subjects could memorize word pairs of varying concreteness and "imageability." The subjects provided imageability values by ranking words (such as *cat* and *courage*) according to their relative ease in being visualized; participants also generated concreteness values (defined in terms of reference to sense experience) that ranked the extent to which the word refers to something sensory and perceptible. These individual rankings were averaged to provide baseline numbers for a given word's imageability and concreteness. Paivio found that concrete words are remembered more than abstract words, and high imageability words more than low imageability words. His research also generated a strong correlation (.83) between concreteness and imageability, which suggested an underlying structure connecting the two: "*c* and *I* substantially measure the same underlying variable" (79).

Paivio's explanation of these mnemonic differences is his influential "dual coding theory." This theory posits two ways of processing information: a verbal code and a visual code. These codes store information in the brain, and each code can be used to process both types of stimulus (verbal and visual). For instance, a person looking at a picture of a stormy ocean might create a visual image of the sea, thereby using the visual code for processing, or that person might process the image using abstract verbal attributes (i.e., propositions) such as "waves are frothy," "clouds are thick," "sea is green-grey." At the same time, one might process a verbal stimulus such as "In my seashaken house / On a breakneck of rocks" by visualizing a run-down cottage by the sea or by forming an abstract verbal representation of the scene through densely-organized meanings and connotations.

While both codes are available to process verbal and visual stimuli, Paivio's research suggests that the visual code (i.e., mental imagery) comes into play more with concrete words than with abstractions: "The image code increases in availability uniformly over the three levels [i.e., abstract words, concrete words, pictures]" (233); "The more concrete or 'thing-like' the stimulus or the task situation, the more likely is it to evoke memory images that can be functionally useful in mediating appropriate responses in this situation" (9). It is important to remember that this imagery response for concrete words does not replace a verbal response but rather operates alongside it. Further, concrete language does not *guarantee* imagery – it *allows* or *suggests* imagery as a cognitive option. Not all readers will process concrete words through the visual code.

The dual-coding theory holds that concrete words are more memorable than abstract words because they can be stored both as images and as abstract verbal accounts. Abstract words, on the other hand, usually rate low on imageability and therefore tend to be processed only through the verbal code. Because concrete words are processed in two different ways, they are more secure and more memorable: one can forget one code but still make use of the other. At the level of the word, then, Paivio's research suggests that the Imagist insistence on concrete language, when put into poetic practice, calls forth mental imagery more than more abstract poetry does.

Further and perhaps more direct support for the connection between concreteness and mental imagery comes from studies that have measured the time it takes subjects to form an image of a given word. This measure, known as image latency, has revealed clear differences between concrete and abstract words. In multiple studies, subjects were asked to press a button when they formed an image of the referent of a word. For concrete words, the mean latency is

around one second. For abstract words, the task requires finding a related object, and such effort increases the latency over concrete words; yet abstract word latency decreases in repeated trials: "The latency to image to abstract words, where the images usually involve related objects (e.g. a church for "religion") is longer than for concrete words, and reduces with repeated trials when the problem of finding an appropriate object is reduced" (Morris and Hampson 69). Morris and Reid (1973) found abstract word latency times of 2.64 seconds for the first trial and 1.88 seconds for the second trial. In other words, in terms of raw (i.e., initial) latency, subjects form images of concrete words about two and a half times as fast as abstract words.

There is a strong link between imageability and imagery speed, which completes the triangle between concreteness, imageability, and speed. That is, Paivio demonstrated that concreteness and imageability are closely connected, and multiple studies have shown that concreteness and speed (i.e., short latencies) are connected — all that is left is the relationship between imageability and speed. The prior relationships suggest that imageability and speed should combine in a direct relationship; the more imageable the word, the faster it should appear in the mind (or, the shorter its latency). Numerous studies have confirmed this expectation.

Cocude and Denis (1988) instructed subjects to form "as clear and accurate a visual image as possible" after hearing each of 24 nouns. Because the researchers were investigating both image latency and duration, they crafted three different conditions: a generation condition, a generation-cessation condition, and a cessation condition. In the first subjects only had to press a button when the image was formed; in the second, they pressed the button once when the image was formed and again when it disappeared or changed in content; in the third subjects pressed the button only when the image they formed disappeared or changed. The nouns, which had previously been rated for imagery values and selected for emotional neutrality, were arranged

into three groups: high imagery (including “bottle,” “ear,” and “duck”; mean imagery value on 0-6 scale = 5.3), medium imagery (“sculptor,” “distance,” “sketch”; mean = 3.9) and low imagery (“system,” “caution,” “notion”; mean = 1.8). During the test these nouns were presented in random order.

The experiment revealed that, as expected, high imagery nouns generated images faster than low imagery nouns. However, there were a few surprises. While the low imagery nouns produced much longer latencies than the higher imagery nouns, the latencies for high and middle imagery nouns were not significantly different, despite their different imagery ratings. In the generation condition, latencies were as follows: high imagery, 5.3 seconds; medium imagery, 6.0 seconds; low imagery, 10.7 seconds. Coucude and Denis acknowledged that these times are much longer than what other studies have found; they noted that their instructions did not emphasize speed as much as other studies, and that many subjects thought the test was emphasizing image content, not speed.

The latencies were much shorter across the board in the generation-cessation condition (HI = 2.9 sec; MI = 3.5 sec; LI = 7.4 sec). The researchers speculated that the addition of the second timed task increased arousal in the subjects and led to faster generation times. Surprisingly, Coucude and Denis found that image duration increased from high to low imagery values – that is, low imagery words produce more lasting images. Most important for our purposes, however, the results of the latency trials confirmed the imageability-speed correlation; as the authors put it, words “that have the highest imagery value and that are most likely to elicit visual images, have shorter image latencies, and the latencies lengthen as the word imagery value decreases” (90).

D'Anguilli and Reeves (2002) found that imagery vividness and image latency are inversely related; that is, the more vivid the image, the less time that image takes to form in the mind. Certainly, vividness is not the same as imageability, but they are closely related: when one considers the ease or difficulty of forming an image from a verbal stimulus, a vivid response suggests ease. Without using the word "vividness," Coucude and Denis (1988) authorized "richness" as an alternate version of imagery ratings: "Other operational approaches to imagery value, where this indicator is expressed in terms of a concept's richness in figurative features, confirm the inverse relationship between word imagery value and declared image latency" (90). In other words, words that produce rich, vivid images count as high imagery words.

D'Anguilli and Reeves asked subjects to generate images from verbal descriptions and to press a button when the image was complete, that is, when they could not notice any further improvements in clarity and detail. (The researchers also asked subjects to project their images into boxes of varying size, in order to test for the effects of image size on latency.) Four seconds after pressing the button, subjects had to rate their images on a 1-7 scale of vividness. While the data did not reveal a significant relation between projected size and latency, the data demonstrated a clear inverse relation between vividness and latency: images rated as more vivid took less time to form.

We should pause to consider the implications of these results for theories of visual imagery. These findings are surprising: one might easily speculate that richer, more vivid images take more time to form because they involve more information and greater articulation. This speculation would be in line with the Kosslyn's "buffer hypothesis" of image formation, which theorizes that a visual buffer, or working memory structure, articulates parts and details within a schematic "skeletal image." The visual buffer also resizes the image if necessary. The

"buffer hypothesis" is perhaps a modern incarnation of the antiquated concept of "imagination images," or images that one creatively elaborates, which stretches back to Ogden (1913). The hypothesis suggests a "mental TV" metaphor: the images are edited and resized on a mental screen, and these adjustments to picture quality take time. On the mental TV, vividness increases with time (D'Anguilli and Reeves 1179).

Kosslyn has found some support for this buffer hypothesis. In one 1983 experiment, he and his colleagues presented subjects with pictures of animals that were either basic line drawings (emphasizing the outline) or richer, more detailed pictures with complex inner articulation. Kosslyn found that subjects took more time to form an image of the detailed picture, though the difference was slight (2.8 seconds for detailed; 2.6 for less detailed). In other words, with greater complexity comes a longer latency. One significant difference between the studies, however, is that in Kosslyn's experiment his subjects worked from percepts (i.e., real pictures) while the other latency trials used verbal cues to generate latency times. Kosslyn began with given complex/vivid images rather than asking subjects to create their own. Yet this result still seems to temper the vividness results slightly by demonstrating that complex images take more time to form; or at least the result suggests that vividness and internal complexity are different measures, and that vivid images are probably not more complex than vague ones.

The Coucude and D'Anguilli findings suggest that vividness does not increase over time, and almost the opposite: that vivid images appear faster than vague ones. These results support the "activation hypothesis," which holds that processing systems normally activated by perceptions will also be activated by mental images, especially strong, vivid ones. The more vivid the image, the more it activates the processing mechanisms. As D'Anguilli and Reeves write, "vividness may reflect the level of activation of the visual memory system, and image

generation speed may be related to that activation, resonating the adaptive principle that some visual mechanisms react more quickly to more intense or more informative stimulation" (1180). A helpful metaphor here is the "mental gallery" metaphor, which suggests that the mind contains many different pre-made images of familiar objects and scenes, even in different sizes and from multiple perspectives; following Ogden (1913), these are "memory images." In this gallery, vivid images are processed and called to awareness faster than poor quality images.

While these experiments do support the activation hypothesis over the visual buffer one (and here we must acknowledge that *both* hypothetical systems could exist, each appropriate for different cognitive tasks), by showing the inverse relation between imagery values and latency they also solidify the overall links between concrete language, imageability, and speed of mental image formation. The strength of these various connections mitigates against the possibility of a few rogue, outlying results; the coherence between all three legs of the triangle indicates that concrete language produces reliable, interdependent effects. Moreover, the inverse relation between imageability (or vividness) and latency suggests that it is the very imageability of concrete language, not simple word familiarity, that allows one to image concrete language faster than abstract language. More broadly, such speed reinforces the general idea that concrete, imageable language encourages mental imagery more than abstract language does – images that appear faster are more likely to be a part of a reading experience that progresses from word to word without necessarily waiting for images to form.

Neurological Data

As technology has advanced, psychological studies on concreteness effects have increasingly sought out neurological data to inform the topic. Some neurologically-oriented

research supports the dual coding theory and suggests that concrete language is processed through two codes, the verbal code and the visual code, while abstract language is processed primarily through the verbal code. Kounios and Holcomb (1994) discovered that differences in word concreteness correlate with differential hemispheric activity: concrete words created activity across both hemispheres, while abstract words created activity generally within one hemisphere. In broadest terms, concrete language created more mental activity than abstract language, which obliquely suggests differential processing; but the results are even more pointed.

In their study, subjects were asked to classify words as either abstract or concrete. The subjects were hooked up to ongoing electro-encephalograms (EEGs) that measured their brain activity. The ongoing measurement allowed the researchers to analyze brain activity that developed as a response to the verbal stimuli; the EEGs revealed event-related potentials (ERPs), or waveforms of electrical activity in the brain, for different locations on the scalp. The study found key differences in the N400 component of the ERPs (the negative waveform "valley" that typically reaches its nadir around 400 ms after stimulus), a component associated with semantic processing: concrete words elicited larger N400s than abstract words.

More importantly, however, the difference in the N400 ratings between word types was most pronounced in the right hemisphere, which Paivio (1986) has hypothesized as the site of the imagery system. In other words, the difference between cognitive processing of concrete and abstract words was most apparent within the right hemisphere. This difference within the right hemisphere supports the theory of dual processing systems: concrete words are processed by both hemispheres, while abstract words are processed mainly by the left hemisphere. The authors wrote:

The N400 advantage for concrete words was greater over the right

> hemisphere than the left. This suggests that at least some of the additional semantic information activated by concrete words is of a different type than that activated by abstract words. This conclusion is consistent with dual-coding theory, which states that both concrete and abstract words are processed by the left-hemisphere verbal system, but that the right-hemisphere imaginal system primarily processes concrete words. (821)

Kounios and Holcomb noted that even if the two proposed processing systems cannot be mapped so neatly onto left and right hemispheres, the different ERP patterns produced by the different word types support the larger claim that multiple systems are at play. That is, even if the scalp-measured electrical activity does not always locate the underlying neural activity, "any clear topographic difference between the processing of abstract and concrete words would support dual-coding theory" (807). The fact that the study *did* discover a strong hemispheric (i.e., not just an alternate topographical pattern) difference only bolsters the dual coding theory and the related claim that an anatomical split divides the verbal and visual processing systems.

Other research suggests not just hemispheric differences between concrete and abstract words, but a specifically visual processing mode for certain words, especially concrete nouns and certain verbs. Such research follows a model of associative learning proposed by Donald Hebb in the late 1940s. The Hebbian model is an neurophysiological account of cognitive processing that opposes both localizationist and holistic approaches; while the localist argues that specific brain activities (e.g., word comprehension) take place in a very small, discrete cortical area, and the holist asserts that all cortical areas contribute to complex brain processes, Hebb proposed a cell assembly model in which specific but cortically distant areas join together for processing specific items. The central premise here is that co-activation creates association, or, as the

catchphrase has it, “neurons that fire together wire together.” The Hebbian model has been refined slightly over the years, most seriously by James McClelland and his work on parallel distributed processing, but overall, research confirms the principal features of Hebb’s cell assembly model.

The Hebbian model has been used in research investigating language processing. The findings are significant to our discussion on several levels. For one, research has confirmed a broad cognitive distinction between content and function words: content words are processed across both hemispheres (i.e., the cell assembly has an almost equal number of nodes in both hemispheres), but function words are highly lateralized within the left brain (Pulvermuller 260). This distinction corresponds to Paivio’s dual-coding theory in that many content words are more imageable than function words (which are not imageable at all) and thus make use of the right hemisphere in addition to the left one. In addition, the Hebbian model suggests that the level of abstractness in content words will produce a different cell assembly. As Pulvermuller notes, “there is a continuum of meaning complexity between the “simple” concrete content words that have clearly-defined entities they can refer to (so-called referents), more abstract items that may or may not be used to refer to objects and actions, and function words that cannot be used to refer to objects” (261). Concrete content words will produce more connections across hemispheres than abstract content words, which are in turn more cross-hemispheric than function words; the cell assemblies of abstract words are compromises between concrete and function words.

Most provocatively, researchers have investigated linguistic cell assemblies in terms of embodied perceptual and sensorimotor processes. That is, the Hebbian model proposes that words may produce links between language areas and other, non-linguistic cortical regions: “During language learning, word forms are frequently produced when stimuli to which the words

refer are perceived or actions to which they refer are carried out by the infant. If the cortex is an associative memory, the modalities and processing channels through which meaning-related information is being transmitted must be important for formation of cortical assemblies" (261). In other words, if a child generally uses the visual processing mode when forming the word "dog," or the taste mode for "sweet," those specific cognitive modes should contribute significantly to the cortical assembly aroused by the word. This area of research is called "embodied cognition," because it analyzes the ways in which our bodily experience (our experience of interacting with the world through our bodies) informs our cognitive processes.

Researchers have focused attention on visual and motor processes in particular in testing the notion of word-prompted cell assemblies. Their findings suggest a strong distinction: vision words are processed in part by the visual cortices in the temporal and occipital areas, and motor words involve motor areas in the frontal lobe. Vision words include animals and large man-made objects, and motor words are typically verbs defining actions performed by people (268). Though in general this schema makes nouns visual and verbs motor-based, researchers acknowledge and try to account for the strong visual aspect of many verbs, especially those actions not performed by humans.

Evidence from multiple neurological methods supports a vision/motor distinction to nouns and verbs. Lesions in temporal and occipital areas (visual areas) often impair the processing of nouns, and lesions in frontal areas disrupt the processing of verbs (269). In addition, EEG recordings indicate a similar disparity: "stronger electrocortical signs of activity were found after verb presentation over bilateral motor cortices, but more pronounced event-related potentials over visual cortices in the occipital lobes were seen after nouns" (Pulvermuller 270). That is, verbs generated more brain activity in motor areas, and nouns created more

activity in visual areas. These words, it should be noted, were carefully chosen according to motor and visual associations; the electrocortical differences were not based on word class alone. Nonetheless, the evidence remains that "action" verbs generate processing in motor areas, and "visual" nouns in visual areas.

The embodied cognition model, supported by research, suggests that while concrete words in general are more imageable than abstract words, reading certain concrete words, especially "visual" nouns, actually involves parts of the brain's visual processes. That is, some classes of concrete words are processed in areas of the brain that correspond to visual processing; these words are not just imageable, they actually rely on (some of) the brain's visual areas for cognitive support. The relation between imageability and visual processing gets tricky, and can only be speculative: perhaps a word seems imageable only because it sparks visual processing mechanisms, or perhaps a word must be readily imageable before it can call on visual processing. The causal connection is not clear. And one cannot be sure that visual processing creates or increases mental imagery, though the connection does seem likely. But this loose class of cognitively explicit "vision" words does reinforce the notion that certain linguistic stimuli provoke visual cognitive processes. Further, the cell assembly research fits together well with the dual coding theory by locating specific brain areas sparked by imageable words.

In sum, research based on subject self-reports (of imageability and image latency), memory tests, and gathered brain activity are consistent with the dual coding theory and other modal theories of mental representation (i.e., theories that reject the claim that all representations are amodal); the research also supports the premise that concrete language is tied to mental imagery far more than abstract language is. This deep support may only "prove" what students

of language and literature have intuited for centuries, but it provides an important empirical validation for such intuitions.

We should take a moment to consider some of the implications of all this research. For one, given the cell assembly research, does Imagism's language target visual processing areas of the brain? John Gage, for one, suggests yes. Gage argues that the Imagists willfully (or blindly) misconstrued Fenollosa's work on the ideogram: they bypassed his insistence on the ideogram's implicit action and temporal cues, and settled instead on the notion of an instantaneous image. Fenollosa believed that an ideogram is a picture of a verb, not a noun, and this temporal element brought the ideogram closer to reality; but the Imagists read ideograms as signs of things in themselves, static and concentrated pictures outside the (blurring) flux of time, and they took this version of the ideogram as a rallying sign for Imagism.

All of this is to say that the Imagists, especially Pound, were particularly interested in the noun as a means of surpassing the flux of time; as Gage writes, "the pictorial quality of the ideogram, despite Fenollosa's actual arguments concerning its function, seemed to the imagists to be as close as language could come to *things* in themselves. Theirs was a poetry of nouns" (20). Following the neurological research into "vision" words, such a concentration of nouns suggests strong activation of the brain's visual processing centers. In other words, a noun-based poetry is likely to be particularly visual in physiological terms because concrete nouns are most likely to excite those particular areas. Regardless of their philosophical or (luckily) intuitive reasons for doing so, the Imagists chose the noun as the mainstay of their visually-freighted poetics, with appropriately visual physiological consequences.

Given that concrete words inspire imagery much more than abstract words, the Imagist insistence on precise, non-abstract diction powers a poetry that is likely to inspire imagery in the reader. Yet for all their interest in seeing and mental imagery, the Imagists were also invested in the emotional charge of their poetry. As mentioned previously, the Imagists sought to register this emotion without explicitly naming it through "comment" words; describing the emotions literally would only create the same staid sentiment that the Edwardian poets produced. The imagists had to create an emotional response within the strictures of their verbal hygiene – that is, within the confines of precise, concrete language. Pound's equation of "sea, cliffs, night" with "mood," redolent of the more explicit formula that Eliot would later name the "objective correlative," accounts for this very limitation, and suggests that concrete language can inspire emotion. This is a provocative suggestion, and it bears strong inquiry. In addition, with the strong links between concrete language and imagery in mind, one must wonder about the role of imagery within this equation: do mental images mediate between the language and the emotion? Do the words produce affect on their own, or through the framework of visual images, or both? Do mental images increase or inhibit the reader's emotion?

The relation between imagery and affect is deeply complicated but still suggestive. As Esrock notes, preliminary research in the 1970s advanced a view of strong cognitive lateralization, and within this framework both image function and affective processing were linked (in the right hemisphere). Since then, however, further research – including studies demonstrating links between the imagery system and the bilateral perceptual system – has eroded the strength of this claim. Nonetheless, the right hemisphere is still scientifically

regarded as superior in recalling and recognizing visual images, and the cognitive connections between images and affect, though looser than previously thought, still obtain (Esrock 132-134).

Neurological research indicates that the brain forms mental images using the same chemical pathways (the "neurophysiological substrate") that it uses to process visual perceptions, which suggests that the image of something will trigger the same chemical responses as the perception of it (Esrock 135). That is, if actually seeing a truck barreling down on you inspires fear, or seeing a smiling baby inspires joy or a sense of protectiveness, then the mental images of these scenes will elicit the same physiological responses in the brain. In other words, images may create emotions as automatically as real world percepts do; images replicate experiences on a deep chemical level, including the attendant affective experience.

The connection between images and affect has also been explored in the context of reading. Mark Sadoski (1988) demonstrated that visual images often accompany affective responses to a text. Sadoski asked college students to rate individual paragraphs in terms of imagery, affect, and structural importance (importance to the plot). He found that subjects reported visual imaging in places of structural importance and emotional importance; significantly, though, many subjects experienced images that were not cued to structural landmarks, but only to affective cues. This experiment suggests that imagery and affect are linked within the reading experience. Yet the precise causal nature of this link is unclear: do images inspire emotions, or vice-versa? Despite this uncertainty, the experiment reinforces the bridge between imagery and affect.

Some work on affective responses to verbal and imagined material, however, challenges the connection between images and emotion. Margeurite Cocude (1988) suggested that visual imagery may actually decrease the intensity of the perceived emotion. In this study, subjects

were presented with verbal stimuli that ranged in emotional polarity (positive/negative) and intensity. Half the subjects were instructed to form images of the stimuli and then rate the stimuli for emotional intensity, and the other half were asked to provide only intensity ratings. Cocude found that the imagery condition created lower ratings of emotion for the charged stimuli: "On the average, subjects in the experimental group gave highly emotional (positive and negative) stimuli less extreme ratings than did subjects in the control group, while there was no difference among groups in their rating of neutral stimuli" (218). Cocude conjectured that the imagers generally "neutralized" or "watered down" the intense content: "The stimulus word 'corpse' was imaged as a wax dummy; a caress was imaged in relation to a pet rather than to a person" (219).

Yet this research does not unilaterally prove that imagery decreases affect. For instance, contra Cocude's explanation, one might speculate that subjects rated words as less intense after imaging them because those words are implicitly placed in relation to the vivid, intense images that preceded them. That is, the imagery is so affectively charged that the verbal stimulus seems thin in comparison; perhaps the emotions have somehow "lodged" in the image and are less available in the verbal context. Or, one might speculate that it is the experience of mediation, not specifically imagistic mediation, that decreased the perceived emotional intensity of the words; perhaps asking subjects to create verbal associations before rating the intensity of the stimuli would also create lower intensity ratings than the immediate rating condition; perhaps asking subjects to form verbal correlates for a presented image would decrease that stimuli's intensity against a control group. Yet all the same, Cocude's finding does speak to the reader's experience of (individual) words. The experiment suggests that those who image the scenes presented by Imagist poetry may perceive the *verbal* experience (though perhaps not the total poetic response)

as less intense than those who do not image. That is, imaging Imagism may weaken the affective power of its words.

Another experiment complicates the relation between imagery and affect, and perhaps supports my alternate reading of Cocude's findings. Emily Holmes and Andrew Mathews (2005) discovered that imaging negative scenarios increases anxiety more than verbally integrating them does; in addition, the imagers reported increased emotion overall, as judged by responses to ambiguous (i.e., not explicitly intense) scenarios. As Holmes and Mathews put it, "In two experiments, we found that instructions to imagine aversive events led to greater increases in reported anxiety than did instructions to focus on the verbal meaning of the same descriptions" (495-6). In other words, they found that negative images elicit greater affect than aversive words do. Further, their finding of greater overall emotional intensity after imaging undermines the notion that imagery decreases affect *in general*; this finding suggests that Cocude's results speak to the effect of imagery on verbal affect (the emotional charge of *words*) in particular.

All this research suggests that mental imagery and emotion *are* connected somehow. Certainly, concrete language can elicit emotion on its own, but images inspired by concrete language will probably generate stronger emotions, perhaps even replicating the chemical representation of a lived emotional experience. The Imagist avoidance of abstract emotion words, then, should not hinder the affective response, and insofar as the concrete language leads to mental imagery, the reader's affective response may well be heightened. Though Pound should still be challenged on his claim that the phrase "dim lands" automatically evokes peacefulness, his broader assertion that concrete referents inspire emotional moods still stands –

especially if, in line with the evidence presented earlier in the chapter, the concrete words activate mental images.

Esoterica: The Problem of Confusing Concrete Language

Despite the strong association between nouns and visual processes, not all nouns are equally imageable. While research suggests that concrete words promote mental imagery, the class of "concrete words" is large and no doubt includes some examples that do not conform so well to the rule. How can concreteness be problematic? Certainly, returning to our original example, the concrete "cars," "'busses," "freight-trains" of "Eros and Psyche," its sooty "yard," "sky," and "statue," are likely to be more memorable and imageable than the "fount," "speech," and "passion" of Dowson's poem. But the link between concreteness and imageability may not always obtain so perfectly. For instance, one can imagine that some words may be *too* concrete – they may be so exact that the reader does not know what they are, or what they look like. Paivio in fact notes this explicitly as one of the cases in which the concreteness-imageability relation breaks down: "These are mainly uncommon words such as *antitoxin, armadillo,* etc., which presumably are recognized as names of 'things,' hence their high *c* ratings, but the things have been infrequently experienced, hence the low *I*" (79).

H.D., for one, must exceed the imaging capacities of many readers with her horticultural exactitude. The second section of her "Sea Gods" begins:

> But we bring violets,
>
> Great masses — single, sweet,
>
> Wood-violets, stream-violets,
>
> Violets from a wet marsh. (*1916* 18)

Though the stanza begins innocently (i.e., commonly) enough, the third and fourth line ask the reader to distinguish between various types of violets – a daunting task, especially for the reader who might have been shaky on the general flower to begin with. H.D. peppers the rest of this section with other floral additions, variations on a theme: "river-violets," "bird-foot violets," "hyacinth-violet." (All variations mentioned in the poem actually exist.) In providing the defiantly exact word, not the "nearly-exact," H.D. has stepped away from the "language of common speech" that most readers can readily image.

Because very specific, concrete words can be difficult to image, some critics argue that attempting to image them will only lead readers away from the thrust of the poem. In line with the long anti-imaging tradition of 20th century criticism, Gage holds that the specific type of tree ("fir") mentioned in H.D.'s "Oread" is unimportant in visual terms. Here is that short poem in full:

> Whirl up, sea —
> whirl your pointed pines,
> splash your great pines
> on our rocks,
> hurl your green over us
> cover us with your pools of fir. (*1915* 28)

Gage suggests that attending to the various distinctions between pine and fir that would be necessary to image them separately is a fool's errand: "If one assumed that the reader is supposed to 'image' a fir tree, as opposed to all other types of pine, it is further assumed that the poet expects the reader to know the morphological differences between a fir and, say, a spruce.

(Is it a balsam fir or a silver fir. *Fir* itself is generic.) In what way could it possibly matter, considering the context of the poem?" (78)

Gage maintains that the only relevant distinction between the two types of trees is propositional – what is important is the shift between categories, from the general class of "pines" to the particular "fir." (In fact, pine and fir are both at the "genus" level; firs are not included within pines.) In his view, the movement towards specificity "makes the Oread's plea more immediate," but this immediacy is totally distinct from the particular look or image of the fir. One might note here that the taxonomical relation of pine and fir (or even a wrong one!) is probably just as obscure as a strong mental image of the two, but Gage's point remains: readers may find it difficult or impossible to image overly concrete words, and these images may not even be necessary to understand the poem.

Alongside the esoteric "wood-violet" and "stream-violet," this critique suggests that while imageability may increase from abstract to concrete words, it probably falls off as concrete language becomes more and more specific. Concrete language is most imageable when both exact and common. On a related note, Paivio's theory that concrete words are remembered better because they access two codes has been challenged by those who argue that concrete words are merely more familiar (and thus more memorable) than abstract words. Paivio has responded by accounting for degrees of familiarity, and his results have held; the issue is still under investigation, however (Esrock 98).

Negation

Another potential pitfall for concreteness effects within Imagism is the negative case. In this instance, the problem is not that the concrete words are too esoteric and obscure to be

visualized, but rather that the poem treats the concrete words negatively, in terms of what is *not* there. Imaging what, strictly, is not there may cause interpretive problems for the reader. That is, the poem may use concrete language negatively to demonstrate a particular point, but the reader may lose that point by imaging that language positively. Indeed, how else can one image? (Or, to put the issue in terms of the sister arts framework, one advantage for the literary has always been that pictures cannot express what is *not* there: pictures cannot say no.) It is simple to see that a negative claim does not magically prevent imagery: phrases like "no dogs were painted blue" or even the famous "don't think of an elephant," while perhaps extreme, indicate that images often come regardless of propositional meaning. While this tendency only supports the idea that Imagist poems solicit images, it also raises questions about the semantic appropriateness of those images.

In H.D.'s "Hermes of the Ways," for instance, the third stanza of the second section defines – perhaps problematically – the poetic object in terms of what it is not:

> The boughs of the trees
> Are twisted
> By many bafflings;
> Twisted are
> The small-leaved boughs.
> But the shadow of them
> Is not the shadow of the mast head
> Nor of the torn sails. (*1914* 22)

The poem declares, propositionally, that the shadow of the boughs is not these other shadows. Yet this propositional declaration may also be imaged – the reader may visualize the shadow of

the mast head and the shadow of the sails – and this image could, potentially, undermine the strength of effect (whether propositional or imagistic) for the intended shadow. Imaging the shadow of the sails would, by this account, either distract the reader from the intended bough shadow or replace that shadow entirely, disrupting the poem's semantic force.

Yet this starts to feel a bit limiting. The poem exerts semantic force even through the propositions it negates – the negated elements are not mere null categories, void of signification. On the contrary, the poem suggests a relation between the bough shadow and the shadows of the mast and sails, whether that relation attends to differences of shape, association, or context. This principle – that negation can produce relations of substance – is perhaps more apparent with abstract words. The phrase, "Jealousy is not anger," for instance, prompts the reader to think about how jealousy and anger are both similar and different; the reader does not simply disregard anger and muse on jealousy alone.

In this vein, the apparently distracting (or even obliterating) shadows in H.D.'s poem serve a semantic purpose by prompting a relationship with the bough shadows. If the reader images a shadow of a sail, for instance, that shadow would help the reader see more clearly what is special about the shadow of the boughs; the torn sails would likely generate a large shadow interrupted by narrow cuts of sunshine, an image that throws into relief the delicacy of the shadows created by twisted, "small-leaved boughs." This example is a tricky case – the poem shifts so abruptly to what the shadows are not, and this abruptness threatens to dominate the poem. Yet even in this tricky case, visualization of the negated objects still informs and develops the topic.

In other poems negated images seem not to threaten the semantic thrust, but rather to organize and promote it. For instance, if a poem sets up one poetic context then moves into

another, negating the first context before moving on can help sharpen the contrast between the two. It makes sense that imaging the negated first context would only help sharpen the image of the second context.

Aldington's "Bondage" seems to confirm this notion. In the first three stanzas the speaker rhapsodizes on the glory of worldly sensation, but then the poem shifts into a darker, disconsolate mood. In making this shift the poem uses negation strategically to call to mind the beautiful sensations that have been lost. The fourth stanza reads:

All this is gone;
There are no leaves, no sea,
No shade of a rich orchard,
Only a sterile, dusty waste,
Empty and threatening. (*1917* 6)

If imaged, the leaves, sea, and orchard appear in the mind as a lost paradise; though these images are no longer true to the speaker's situation, they are nostalgic memory-pieces that accentuate the ruin of the "dusty waste." Far from being inappropriate or off-target, images of this lost paradise help make the reader more sympathetic to the speaker's pain – the reader images the beautiful scenes that the speaker carries in memory, and then together reader and speaker face the present harshness.

What's also remarkable in this case is that the negated objects are much more imageable (through concreteness) than the "actual" situation, the "sterile, dusty waste." The difficulty in imaging this reality is suggestive: perhaps the speaker cannot bear to see his surroundings and would rather take solace in his mental images; perhaps the dusty waste is most traumatic for its

emptiness, and the concrete objects necessary for a strong mental image would contravene this painful emptiness. At any rate, strong images of the negated objects help propel these readings.

These examples demonstrate that visualizing what the poem declares is *not* there can help the reader understand what is. Negated objects still produce relations among the poem's forms; likewise, "negative" imagery interacts with "positive" imagery to help clarify the overall visual experience and meaning of the poem.

Context and Parataxis

A greater issue with the concreteness findings is that they apply to an extremely limited experimental situation. Taken individually, Aldingtons's "cars" and "freight-trains" may be more memorable, comprehensible, and imageable than Dowson's "speech" and "passion." Yet these nouns do not appear as discrete units in isolated word-pairs, as in Paivio's tests; rather, they take their part within a larger grouping – the stanza – that organizes them syntactically and semantically. This stanza lies within the whole poem. It is necessary to ask how the concreteness or abstraction of words influences memory (and, by inference, imagery) within a larger frame.

This chapter recruits research on reading to understand the effects of concrete language at higher orders of language. While the research here is mixed, even the most stringent view of concreteness effects must acknowledge the mnemonic power of concrete language within discrete, randomly ordered sentences – the condition of distinctive rather than relational information. In grammatical terms, this is the condition of parataxis. The chapter moves into the imagistic value of parataxis and then considers the many varieties of parataxis within the Imagist oeuvre. This Imagist propagation of parataxis is not happenstance, but deeply fitting: parataxis lines up well with embedded principles of Imagist poetics, such as absolute perception and instantaneity; parataxis serves these principles very well. Though one must acknowledge moments of narrative connection and hypotaxis in the poetry, parataxis is legion, and this triumph of distinctive information helps keep Imagism's concrete language powerful and imageable.

Sentence Verification

Psychological research on concreteness effects has not considered poetic forms like stanzas but it has investigated sentences and paragraphs. While these units do not provide the formal features of stanzas, sentences and paragraphs *do* provide the key factor separating individual words from poetic groupings: context. The research investigates whether the context of larger discourse units minimizes (or even obliterates) the concreteness effects of individual words. Does concrete language lose its power within a semantic framework, a context?

The effects of concreteness are much debated at the level of the sentence; the research results are quite complicated here. In general, researchers have used two principle modes of analysis – sentence verification and sentence comprehension.

Sentence verification tasks ask subjects to make a timed meaningfulness judgment (i.e., does this sentence make sense?) for sentences composed of concrete or abstract words. The assumption is that faster verification times indicate faster comprehension of the sentence, which in turn indicate greater comprehensibility of one type of language. In general, these studies have demonstrated that concrete sentences are processed slightly faster than abstract ones. These findings indicate that concreteness effects still exist at the level of the sentence — that is, the concreteness of the words still matters when those words are part of a sentence. However, these findings do not reveal the precise nature of the relation between speed (of processing) and mental imagery.

Klee and Eyesenck (1973) asked subjects to decide whether given sentences were plausible and meaningful. Their results indicated that subjects made judgments for concrete sentences (such as “The veteran soldier rode the lame horse”) 420 ms faster than for abstract sentences (such as “The wrong attitude caused a major loss”). This result, however, has been

challenged on the grounds that some of the plausible abstract sentences may not have been very believable (Schwanenflugel 226). In response, Holmes and Langford (1976) sought to level plausibility between sentence types, and found a smaller but still significant time advantage (183 ms) for the verification of concrete sentences.

The implications of these verification studies are not entirely clear, especially in terms of mental imagery. On one hand, they indicate that concrete sentences are easier to comprehend than abstract sentences; this notion confirms our general intuition that concrete language is more accessible and comprehensible than abstract language. Yet on the other hand, the studies are vague in terms of their relation to image processing. If, following the dual coding theory, concrete language is processed both as language and as image, does the relative quickness of concrete sentence verification mean that somehow dual processes work in tandem faster than one, perhaps due to greater semantic activity overall? Perhaps, on the other hand, concrete words are merely processed faster by the verbal system acting alone. Or finally, does the image system alone outpace the verbal system? It is hard to say.

Some research (Glass et al. 1985) suggests that the previous verification tasks probably sidestep imagery, because when the task involves highly concrete language that seems to require imagery for verification (e.g., "A pool table has six pockets"), such concrete sentences take *longer* to verify than abstract sentences. This finding may indicate that concrete sentences are understood quickly only when subjects process them verbally. In effect, the general time advantage for the verification of concrete sentences may be a matter of linguistic processing alone: concrete sentences outpace abstract sentences in terms of verbal processing, but the imageable aspects of concrete sentences, when solicited by particularly "visual" examples, may well make those sentences take longer to verify than abstract sentences, which require only

verbal processing. As the researchers point out, verification involves both basic comprehension and a truth judgment, and mental imagery may come into play for judgment and slow the reaction time at that level – in line with previous findings, basic comprehension could still be faster for concrete sentences. Glass et al. thus allow for concreteness effects (i.e., speed) in sentence comprehension, but suggest that speed may not correlate well with mental imagery. Their study thus suggests two significant things: that certain experimental conditions (such as plausibility ratings) probably do not elicit visualization, and further, that not all concreteness effects (i.e., speed, imagery) work in unison in all experimental situations. Though latency tests demonstrate that concrete words inspire images faster than abstract words, at the level of the sentence, in an experimental condition that does not require subjects to generate images equally for all sentences, mental images seem to slow down the concrete sentences compared to their abstract, less imageable counterparts.

Sentence Comprehension

In general, verification studies show that concrete sentences are processed faster than abstract sentences. But are they understood better? Experiments on sentence comprehension have attempted to answer this question. Unlike verification tests, which rely on reaction time disparities, research into sentence comprehension generally involves memory testing; as with Paivio's word-pairs, memory differences favoring concrete sentences would be used as evidence for different modes of processing. If paragraphs made of concrete sentences are recalled better than paragraphs made of abstract sentences, then one can say that concreteness (with its imagery effects) still matters at the level of the sentence, that imageability still obtains at the higher syntactic level. But if abstract paragraphs are recalled as well as or better than concrete

paragraphs, then one can argue that concreteness effects do not obtain at the paragraph level. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the research findings have been inconsistent here.

On the positive side, Mark Sadoski (1993) found concreteness effects both at the level of sentences and paragraphs: his subjects remembered the concrete versions better than the abstract ones in multiple recall sessions. In this experiment, subjects first rated concreteness, familiarity, interestingness, and comprehensibility for abstract and concrete sentences about 10 historical figures. Different subjects then read pairs of sentences in all their possible iterations (concrete-concrete, concrete-abstract, abstract-concrete, abstract-abstract) and then were tested for recall immediately and after five days. The second phase of the experiment replicated this structure for paragraphs about two historical figures; the paragraphs were rated individually and then combined variously within passages to be recalled immediately and after the five day interim.

At the level of the sentence, the experiment found that "concrete sentences were recalled overall more than twice as well as abstract sentences," and that abstract sentences preceded by concrete sentences were remembered 70% better than abstract sentences preceded by abstract sentences (297). The highest correlation was between concreteness and comprehensibility (.91) while only a moderate correlation linked concreteness and familiarity (.36) (294). (This last point weakens the critique of concreteness effects that claims familiarity as the latent reason for improved memory.) At the level of the paragraph, content from concrete paragraphs was recalled almost three times as well as content from abstract paragraphs (300). As with the sentences, concreteness and comprehensibility were highly correlated both with each other and with recall, and familiarity was not as highly correlated with either comprehension or recall (300).

Interestingly, the recall advantage for concrete paragraphs (over abstract paragraphs) was even higher than for concrete sentences (over abstract sentences). In other words, the contextual situation provided by the paragraph did not undermine concreteness effects, and even may have slightly improved them. As the authors of the study put it, "concreteness effects in text recall did not appear to be attenuated by context availability in this study…That is, concrete information enjoyed an overwhelming advantage over abstract information as text units increased in length from sentence pairs in Experiment 2 to short and long paragraphs in Experiment 4" (301). The context provided by the paragraph structure did not undermine the mnemonic effect of concrete language; according to this study, concrete language still exerts its force within larger discourse units, and in fact exerts greater force there.

On the other hand, some other research does not support these concreteness effects for larger discourse units, finding that readers remember concrete and abstract sentences equally well when those sentences are part of paragraphs. Marschark (1985) found "no reliable differences" for recall of concrete and abstract paragraphs when subjects were instructed to read for comprehension or sheer recall; and in fact, in the comprehension setting the results were slightly better for abstract than concrete versions. In the second phase of the experiment, Marschark modified the form of the information, finding the same results (i.e., null concreteness effect) for both paragraphs and sentences listed in paragraph order. In paragraph form, abstract sentences were even recalled slightly better than concrete sentences. Concreteness effects did not hold for contextually organized sentences presented either line by line or in paragraph form.

The third phase of the experiment changed the presentation again, and here the results turn especially provocative. To guard against the possibility that context is produced solely by the paragraph's macrostructure (i.e., the visual availability of relational information), Marschark

controlled for format even more than in experiment two, presenting the paragraphs one sentence at a time (not itemized on the same page as with the sentence list format, but actually one per page). This variation would help determine if contextual relations depend on visual access to deny concreteness effects. Crucially, Marschark manipulated the test conditions even further: half the subjects studied the sentences in coherent paragraph order, and the other half studied them in random order.

The third phase produced several different findings. First, context does not depend on paragraph macrostructure – that is, the effects of context remained strong for both paragraphs and one-at-a-time sentences. In fact, the imagery effect was *stronger* in the paragraph format, opposing the notion that imagery-denying relational processing is a function of the paragraph's visual availability. (If paragraph structure increased relational processing, then the imagery effects should be lower for paragraphs than for stand alone sentences.) Second, and more important for our purposes, randomizing the sentences produced strong concreteness effects. When presented in random order, concrete materials were recalled about twice as well as abstract materials, "a difference strongly predicted by the dual coding theory" (742). As Marschark later described it: "the concreteness of sentences does not influence sentence memory if the sentences comprise connected prose. On the other hand, memory for sentences is a direct function of concreteness if the sentences are unrelated" (1989 711).

These results significantly challenge the dual coding theory, in effect relegating its effects to sentences that bear little (or no) relation to each other. In effect, while experiment three upheld concreteness effects under conditions of imposed randomness, experiments one and two undermined concreteness effects (and the dual coding theory) by indicating slightly better recall for abstract material than concrete material in paragraph form. The challenge to Paivio is clear:

"The findings in all but the random condition of experiment 3 contrast with the extremely robust differences previously observed when to-be-recalled concrete and abstract material has consisted of lists of unrelated words or sentences."

While Sadoski and Marschark's results perfectly contradict each other, it is hard to say that they balance each other out. The principle of falsifiability comes into play here. In other words, while Sadoski's experiment upholds the dual coding theory for sentences, Marschark's opposite results are more pertinent because they expressly challenge the value of concreteness for sentences. If Marschark's findings have proven the model false in any way, then these findings should be accounted for. (Conversely, if Marschark's findings point to *any* concreteness effects at the level of the paragraph, as they do in the randomized condition, these findings should enjoy very solid standing, appearing as they do in a research situation that undercuts the value of concreteness overall.)

Marschark proposed that the context availability theory, rather than Paivio's dual coding theory, is able to assimilate this seemingly contradictory data. This theory holds that memory effects depend on broad, contextual verbal support; a strong network of verbal relations enables faster and more accurate processing and better recall. The context availability theory declares that rich verbal structures, not images, determine concreteness effects; it theorizes that abstract words may be less memorable than concrete words because their links to contextual information are often weaker. In line with this premise, Marschark looked back over his findings and theorized "that providing context for abstract materials increased relational processing of them, thus offsetting the usual advantage of concrete materials." In other words, when placed in contextual relation, abstract information becomes more rich, variously accessible, and memorable, and thus was able to compete with concrete information.

The idea of context is not the only way to account for the (admittedly contested) breakdown of concreteness effects at the level of the sentence. Researchers have attempted to theorize this dissolution of concreteness effects in various ways. Some (Bransford and Franks 1972) contend that readers distill sentences into single idea-units regardless of the concreteness of the words. Yet context has proved to be a particularly attractive principle for researchers; many speculate that the structure of the paragraph governs individual sentences, relegating them to subsidiary roles in the semantic network.

"Distinctive Information": The Paratactic Principle

In line with this latter notion, Marschark and Hunt (1989) argue that the difference between "relational and distinctive information" is crucial. Relational information concerns how elements unite within a larger whole, and distinctive information determines what is special about a specific element in question. According to the psychological theory based on this system, relational information will be processed on the "higher" level of semantic interconnections than distinctive information; the reader will attend to relational information's place within the larger network rather than its own features. Distinctive information, on the other hand, retains its unique features apart from any larger, structuring organization. Marschark has suggested that these multiple roles of information may account for the lack of concreteness effects in connected prose; the trade-off between relational and distinctive information means that higher-order relations will pull the reader's attention away from distinctive features that might have been imaged.

It is interesting to note how Marschark revised his 1985 speculation that was based on the context availability theory: then, relational information made abstract material more rich and

memorable; in his newer version, relational structures undermine the distinctiveness of concrete language. Once a compensatory *boost* for abstract language, relational information instead becomes a *burden* for concrete language. At any rate, within the later binary system, the visual, mnemonic element of concrete words applies far more to information that is distinctive, not relational. Further, we must remember that this account of concreteness effects is based on experiments that found no concreteness effects at the level of the (coherent) paragraph – but other data (i.e., Sadoski's) suggest that concreteness effects do obtain at that level. Yet because Marschark's findings are the strictest in terms of denying concreteness effects, the exception to his data set (i.e., the circumstances in which concreteness effects do exist: the randomized condition) earns special importance. The randomized condition seems to be the experimental bastion of concreteness effects, and it also seems to power Marschark and Hunt's theoretical account.

At the level of the sentence, this account contends that concrete words and sentences will yield imagery when those units are somehow distinctive, not merely subsumed within a larger information network. Marschark's research does not investigate poetry, but within his prose studies he found the strongest imagery effects in what he calls "scrambled prose." In scrambled prose, individual sentences and phrases - the "lower" levels of discourse - do not unite as relations within a larger whole, and therefore stand out individually. Because distinctive, these elements yield concreteness effects and appeal to imagery.

In literature, the triumph of individual units over the networked whole is most obvious in parataxis. In fact, parataxis explicitly refers to language that lacks coordinating, relational connections. Strictly, parataxis is the coordination of the clauses in a multiple sentence (a sentence with more than one clause) without conjunctions; separate sentences are not truly

paratactic, nor are clauses linked by "and." The common example of parataxis is Caesar's "I came; I saw; I conquered," though even here one could argue (tendentiously) that the semi-colons - shorthand for "and" - suggest a narrative sequence that is itself a basic ordering principle. At any rate, with parataxis the relations between elements are left opaque – did Caesar conquer because he saw something in particular, or merely after getting close enough to see for himself? Did Caesar come in order to see, or did he just come first and then happened to see? Parataxis keeps each element distinct and unsubordinated, and thus its concreteness prompts more imagery than hypotactic (i.e., connected, subordinated) discourse.

We should pause to examine hypotaxis – the opposite of parataxis – in order to understand the issue more clearly. In hypotaxis multiple clauses are linked by conjunctions, object relations, or as relative clauses; subordination, or grammatical governance between clauses, defines hypotaxis. For instance, "I wanted to go, so we left" and "She bought milk, but he bought cheese" are both examples of syndetic coordination, or linking through conjunctions; the conjunctions determine the relations between the multiple clauses, and one clause always governs the other(s), which depends on it for grammatical completion. In terms of "object relations," when a clause serves as the subject, object, or complement of a main clause, the relation between the two clauses is hypotactic. In "Whoever needs money should ask for it," the subordinated clause serves as subject; the whole clause "whoever needs money" is governed by the head term "whoever," and that clause needs the predicate ("should ask for it") for completion. In "I know that you lied," the subordinated clause serves as object. Finally, relative clauses are obviously governed by their head element: in "The man who trained the dogs is tall," the information about dog training only defines who the man is; the information does not stand on its own; grammatically, the information about plural "dogs" is governed by the singular head

"man," which takes the singular predicate "is tall." In all these examples one clause is subordinated to another and thus is governed syntactically by it; the clauses are in an unequal relation. In parataxis, by contrast, the clauses are equal constituents and the relation between them is parallel rather than hierarchical.

In our analysis we will consider parataxis both in its semi-strict grammatical sense and in its larger sense of distinctiveness. The grammatical sense is only "semi-strict" because, following a strong tradition in literary criticism, our application of the concept will not be pure according to the rigid constraints of the linguistic model. That is, the essential notion of non-hierarchical, non-subordinated coordination of equal constituents will obtain, but the finest points of grammatical provenance will not: strictly, parataxis refers only to the relation of clauses within a multiple sentence, but we will use the concept more loosely than this. In our reading parataxis could also include unrelated nouns or noun phrases ("apples / the man who left you / shoes filled with sand") and separate sentences ("The wind brushed the bushes. / The birds swallowed their songs"). Further, in our looser grammatical treatment parataxis can also refer to clauses linked by the conjunction "and," as in "The stars were shining, and the grass was high"; though they are grammatically linked, these clauses often suggest that the discrete parts are disconnected from each other, as with many of Hemingway's longer sentences.

Thus, according to our reading, these lines by Stephen Crane (from his untitled poem known by the first line here) count as parataxis:

A man adrift on a slim spar
A horizon smaller than the rim of a bottle
Tented waves rearing lashy dark points
The near whine of froth in circles. (125)

Strictly, these lines are noun phrases rather than coordinated clauses. Further, the absence of punctuation between them provides no clue to their grammatical relation. Yet if anything, these lines seem *more* disconnected and separate than most of the classic examples of parataxis. Consider, too, the first four lines of Auden's tribute poem, "In Memory of W. B. Yeats":

> He disappeared in the dead of winter:
> The brooks were frozen, the airports almost deserted,
> And snow disfigured the public statues;
> The mercury sank in the mouth of the dying day. (48-49)

The colon at the end of the first line offers no real clue as to grammatical governance, and the next three clauses (the second an implied one, its copula latent) are connected by a loose comma splice and the vague conjunction "and"; only the semi-colon at the end of the third line provides the traditional mark of parataxis. But again, these clauses exhibit the disjuncture of parataxis and thus should count as examples of it.

Such liberties with the exact definition of parataxis are common in the work of literary critics. For example, Bob Perelman, a language poet and theorist of that movement, approaches the term broadly in his discussion of language poetry. In his essay "Parataxis and Narrative: The New Sentence in Theory and Practice," Perelman defines the "new sentence" as one that stands independently from those before and after it; he calls this non-relation between sentences paratactic:

> …a new sentence is more or less ordinary itself but gains its effect by
> being placed next to another sentence to which it has tangential relevance.
> New sentences are not subordinated to a larger narrative frame nor are
> they thrown together at random. Parataxis is crucial: the internal,
> autonomous meaning of a new sentence is heightened, questioned, and

> changed by the degree of separation or connection that the reader perceives with regard to the surrounding sentences. (313)

One should note two things here: first, that Perelman posits a looser, literary sense of parataxis in that he applies it to sentences rather than clauses within a sentence; and second, that Perelman follows Marschark and Hunt in opposing paratactic distinctiveness to the "larger narrative frame" that houses interconnected, subordinating relations.

What is most important for our purposes is a syntactically-created sense of disconnection and separation. Therefore, when P. N. Furbank asserts that Imagism manifests "suppressed syntax" and an "assemblage of fragments" (45), his remarks are relevant even if they do not address, specifically, asyndetic coordination. Furbank's notion of assemblage includes "separate and arrested syntactical gestures" and interruptions — not necessarily parataxis *per se*, but certainly syntactic features within the larger paratactic mode. Our application will follow the lead of work like Furbank's and Perelman's, work that treats the lack of relation between elements, rather than the exact syntactic profile of those elements, as essential to parataxis.

Parataxis and Imagery

Many authors have noticed, though perhaps not in these terms, that literary parataxis encourages an imagery response. John Ruskin, the pre-eminent Victorian art critic, insisted on vision as an ultimate goal: "The greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to *see* something, and tell what it saw in a plain way." Perhaps unsurprisingly, Ruskin's prose was extremely visual: Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning deemed it "very vivid, very graphic, full of sensibility" and Charlotte Bronte wrote of *Modern Painters* that "I feel now as if I had

been walking blindfold – this book seems to give me eyes" (Wettlaufer 242, 245). In his own time and our own, Ruskin has consistently been called a "word painter."

Ruskin thought that mental imagery was essential to the reader's comprehension, and further, that the author should not spell everything out for the reader. In fact, the reader's mental imagery should help create the textual meaning; as Wettlaufer puts it, "Ruskin believed reading to be an act of envisioning where the reader takes a proactive role in the production of meaning" (247). In a lecture addressed to women, Ruskin explained this idea:

> It is not the object of education to turn a woman into a dictionary; but it is deeply necessary that she be taught to enter with her whole personality into the history she reads; to picture the passages of it vitally in her own bright imagination; to apprehend, with her fine instincts, the pathetic circumstances and dramatic relations, which the historian too often only eclipses by his reasoning and disconnects by his arrangements; it is for her to trace the hidden equities of divine reward, and catch site, through the darkness, of the fateful threads of woven fire that connect error with its retribution. (qtd. in Wettlaufer 247)

Certainly, this peroration ranges widely, into even religious tones, but its basic thrust remains relevant: the reader's visual imagination will synthesize relations and meanings even when they are obscure. Indeed, one might say that the obscurity (the eclipses, disconnects, and darkness) of the text necessitates a visual synthesis; given Ruskin's emphasis on vision, his suggestion that the reader "catch site, through the darkness," of meaning must be more than a convenient metaphor for comprehension.

Here textual opacity demands the synthetic balm of mental imagery. Yet we must note that the lack of clear textual relations is not always, or even generally, an injury to be treated; rather, Ruskin values obscurity because it makes readers divine meaning themselves: "if the author is worth anything…you will not get at his meaning all at once…he cannot say it all; and what is more strange, *will* not, but in a hidden way and in parables" (Wettlaufer 248). In this light, obscurity is the mark of strong writing; unclear relations that hide meaning also strengthen it.

Crucially, in his writing Ruskin often "hides" his meaning by keeping his ideas disconnected, or paratactic. Landow notes that Ruskin manifests "an additive style, in which he describes a series of visual details one after the other"; Ruskin "proceeds by dividing his analysis into various visual facts" (29). This paratactic division, as already noted, forces the reader to synthesize the presented "facts," especially through the visual imagination. The lack of connection also makes the ideas more visual in themselves. Consider Proust's explanation of Ruskin's authorial method:

> Ruskin y range l'une a cote de l'autre, mele, fait manoeuvrer et resplendir ensemble toutes les principales idees—ou images—qui ont apparu avec quelque desordre au long de sa conference. C'est son procede. Il passe d'une idée a l'autre sans aucun ordre apparent. (104)
>
> [Ruskin places one beside the other, mixing up, driving together, and invigorating all his principal ideas – or images – that have appeared with considerable disorder throughout his lecture. That's his procedure. He moves from one idea to the other without any apparent order. (my trans.)]

Without using the specific term, Proust virtually explicates the notion of parataxis in Ruskin's prose — he stresses a disordered, desultory motion. What's more, Proust glosses Ruskin's ideas as "images." One must suspect that the syntactic disorder of Ruskin's ideas helps make them appear as images.

So: paratactic and distinctive information is imageable, while hypotaxis and relational information is less so. Yet we must acknowledge an important gap in the theoretical fence separating relational information and imagery; though Marschark and Hunt's theory posits that distinctive information maintains concreteness effects and word imageability, it does not necessarily follow that all patterns of relational information will decrease imagery. In practical terms, one must acknowledge that not all modes of "relations" are the same, and probably not all of them undercut imagery. Spatial relations, for example, including those that expressly link sentence to sentence or clause to clause, surely help the reader organize a mental image. For example, consider the sentence "The tree was bare; at the top a crow shrieked." This sentence, though grammatically paratactic, includes a prepositional phrase in the second clause that refers to the tree of the first clause: the clauses are semantically related in that the first clause helps create the meaning of the second. Yet this relatedness, while theoretically undercutting concreteness effects on a deep cognitive level, greatly helps the reader form a decisive mental image of the scene. Without the relation (i.e., "The tree was bare; a crow shrieked") the reader would not know how to image the crow in the tree, if the crow were to appear at all. Thus spatial relations between clauses and sentences, while undermining distinctive information, can help readers create clearer, more accessible images (and even mental maps for complex structures). These physical relations probably operate outside the class of relational information (including cause and effect, narrative, and categories) that makes up the image-denying semantic network.

Imagist Parataxis

Many Imagist poems have strong paratactic tendencies. The first two stanzas of Fletcher's "The Windmills," from his Arizona series, jump from one object to the next with very little explanation:

> The windmills, like great sunflowers of steel,
> Lift themselves proudly over the straggling houses;
> And at their feet the deep blue-green alfalfa
> Cuts the desert like the stroke of a sword.
>
> Yellow melon flowers
> Crawl beneath the withered peach-trees;
> A date-palm throws its heavy fronds of steel
> Against the scoured metallic sky. (*1916* 35)

The stanzas present four distinct elements, grouped in two-line units that are separated by semi-colons. The relational marker "at their feet" confusingly indicates two possible locations, placing the alfalfa either underneath the windmills (the subject of the prior sentence) or underneath the houses (the last noun). Other than this vague inter-sentence connection, the sentence-ideas move from one to the next without indicating connections. The windmills, melon flowers, and date-palm co-exist in a wary juxtaposition without clear foreground or background.

Within each couplet, however, object relations are quite clear: windmills over houses, alfalfa through the desert, yellow flowers underneath peach trees, and date-palm in front of sky. It is as if the poem provides four postcards, each with its own clear scene, but fails to indicate

how to integrate these postcards into a larger, complete picture. According to the relational/distinctive theory, these couplets are not just imageable for their concrete language and decisive figure-ground schemes, but also precisely because they do not join together into a clear overall relation. They remain distinctive as individual units and therefore maintain their high-imagery status.

Parataxis dominates the structure of Imagism's most famous poem, Pound's "Metro":

In a Station of the Metro

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;

Petals on a wet, black bough.

These two lines (presented in their most common form) have generated much critical commentary on the precise nature of the relation between them, and critical consensus holds that the lines are apposite, juxtaposed. The poem does not specify the relation of faces to petals, nor does it indicate the connection between the subway context and the natural one. (We will call this relation paratactic, though strictly parataxis is the coordination of *clauses*, and here we have only phrases, without verbs. The crucial notion of non-subordinated separation still obtains.)

We should note that this strong, almost brutish form of parataxis – a nearly complete dissociation of (non-clausal) elements within the poem – may serve the Imagist (and strongly Poundian) notion of instantaneous presentation. That is, the lack of coordination between the faces and the petals may lead the reader to – following Pound's famous definition of the image – grasp the "intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time." Such instantaneity (in slightly different form, because for Pound the *presentation* of the complex, not the grasping of it, was instantaneous) may grow out of paratactic impasse. The experience of sudden insight, as psychological research indicates, only happens after one is stuck on a problem; impasse creates

the conditions for the eureka! moment that defines insight. In other words, the paratactic separation of elements here is likely to create a feeling of confusing impasse, and if the reader suddenly "gets" the relation between the elements, that reader will have achieved the instantaneity that the Imagists valued so highly.

One might surmise that the insight-provoking impasse depends on the degree to which the parts are separated: the more radical the disconnect, the more likely the reader will experience impasse. That is to say, the experience of instantaneity will be far more common in "Metro" than in "Windmills," whose relations, while not clear, all fit within the same larger context. Parataxis, then, is not a single and unified textual feature, but rather a spectrum of gaps, disjunctures, and coordinations; certain poems will manifest more parataxis than others, and we must attend to how poems and poets produce parataxis in different ways.

As a metaphor, the terms of "Metro" are difficult to pin down: which is the tenor, and which is the vehicle? (In cognitive linguistic terms, which is target, which is source?) As in the Caesar example, the strongest clue here is order. The faces come first, and thus they tend to be seen as topics, while the subsequent petals modify them. As Crisp notes, "Unless preceding context indicates otherwise, topics are interpreted literally" (85). In fact, in this case, the preceding context – the title of the poem – explicitly creates a subway scene, so the continued reference to that scene in the first line only reinforces its literal status. Context and sequence prove strongest in determining the relation of one line to the other.

The grammatical relationship demands close investigation. In "Metro," the phrases are linked only grammatically, through punctuation; the poem lacks a verb, even the copula. (In fact, the numerical gap between the subjects of the clauses - single apparition, multiple petals - precludes use of the copula.) The most common presentation of the poem, as given above, uses

the colon; in 1916, for the Elkin Matthews edition of *Lustra*, and at points afterward, Pound switched this to a semi-colon (Ellis 205). Both the colon and (perhaps even more strongly) the semi-colon deny a verbal relation, and thus both types of punctuation obscure the connection between the two elements.

Pound's switch to the semi-colon only increases the paratactic edge to the poem, as if the reader were forced to think a mere "and" between the phrases. The colon, though not explicitly relational, seems to carries a bit more direction in it: what comes after a colon generally explains or defines what comes beforehand. In effect, the colon indicates that more explanation is necessary; as Ellis writes, "The colon tended to subordinate the first line to the second by indicating that by itself line one was incomplete" (206). Not all critics agree that the colon implies a relation: Lewis, for one, holds (contra Crisp's intuitive phrase order principle) that either element can be the tenor, and that such ambiguity is "engendered by the colon" (202). Yet all the same, most critics hold that the semi-colon is more ambiguous, more uncertain, and less directional than the colon. Therefore Pound's move to the semi-colon is a move, however minimal, towards increased parataxis. While the poem's elements were "scrambled" to begin with, the semi-colon makes the two units become ever-so-slightly more distinctive and unrelated, and thus increases the imagery effects of their concrete words.

Textual Parataxis: The Rare Case

Aside from its grammatical parataxis, in some versions of publication the poem also encourages imagery effects through its graphic form. That is, the very look of the poem on the page suggests a visual image. The first published version of the poem, in the April 1913 edition of *Poetry*, uses very distinct spacing:

The apparition of these faces in the crowd :

Petals on a wet, black bough .

In terms of parataxis, the spaces serve to physically disconnect the words and phrases from each other, and create what we will term "textual parataxis." But there may be more here. This version also helps suggest, visually, the experience of seeing faces as distinct from a crowd, or petals as distinct against a dark backdrop. Taken as a graphic image, this distinction can take two forms: either the white spaces stand out against the jumbled visuals of the text, or the words in the text, clustered into discrete units, pull apart from both the surrounding, normally-spaced text and the white page. Either way, the spacing of the text brings attention to foregrounded units against a background, the experience Pound felt when he "got out of a 'metro' train at La Concorde, and saw suddenly a beautiful face, and then another and another." In fact, Pound, in describing the poetic "equation" that later came to him as "little splotches of color," further encourages such a visual reading; the spacing of the poem creates little splotches textually. The textual parataxis may help model the image of discrete faces and petals in the mind.

Certainly, other, non-visual ideas may have been at work here. Pound was reading Fenollosa by this time, so he may have been attempting to effect a ideographic combination of words into a single language unit. Such a project, while interested in the visual experience of the words themselves, would not have attempted to create gaps so much as it would have generated them symptomatically.

Publishing evidence suggests that Pound may have moved from this original version to the standardized, normally-spaced version out of necessity rather than aesthetic choice. In March 1913, Pound made a strong point of the spaced layout, writing to Harriet Monroe that he was "careful…to indicate spaces between the rhythmic units, and [that he wanted] them

observed" (*Letters* 53). Monroe followed his spacing cues as closely as she could. But the second time the poem went to print, in *T.P.'s Weekly* on June 6, 1913, the format of that magazine may have exerted pressure on the poem's layout; as Steve Ellis notes, "It seems likely that the…publication's lay-out of three narrow columns to the page meant that the spacing of 'In a Station' had to be closed up and regularized, whether or not this was Pound's intention at the time" (205). Pound in fact reverted to the wide spacing when the poem appeared in the *New Freewoman* two months later, on August 15. Kenner suggests that late-game editorial intervention, rather than the sheer space limitations of the page, may have contributed to the poem's standardization: "Later typesetters, thinking this queer, have closed up the spaces" (197).

Yet while Pound used this spaced version in the April 1913 issue of *Poetry* and later in the August 15, 1913 issue of *New Freewoman*, he subsequently moved away from this version towards the standardized one, which suggests that the wide-spaced version did not satisfy his aesthetic purposes. In the September 1 printing of *The Fortnightly Review*, Pound's article on "Vorticism" included the poem in its regularly spaced version (but with a comma after "Petals"). From that time on, though it continually changed in terms of punctuation – both the comma after "Petals" and the semi-colon/colon question were up for grabs – the poem retained this normative spacing.

Unless we grant editors and typesetters near-constant control over the poem, then, we must admit that Pound did not choose to keep his more visually-stimulating spacing, whatever his initial motivation might have been. And certainly, the fractured spacing is nearly anomalous in the Imagist oeuvre: no other poem demonstrates such unusually graphic text, though some poems provocatively manipulate line lengths and indentations. Yet all the same, the visual

patchwork of the most famous Imagist poem in its first publication may spur readers to image "splotches," discrete units of faces and petals against a vague background.

The Unrelated Method

As noted, most Imagist imagery will *not* be produced by graphic cues, but rather through a fruitful and distinctive separation of terms. Interestingly, the experimental technique of John Gould Fletcher seems to encourage this separation, by jumping between both objects and syntactic structures. His technique, which he developed in 1913 and called the "unrelated method," demanded a new relation between poet and his material: instead of describing objects in terms of their relation to him, Fletcher attempted to instead document his world as he perceived it, no matter how strange the perception. He took long walks throughout London, scrutinizing what he saw, and jotting down his reactions in a notebook. Such reactions would, he hoped, free his poetic objects from the tether of his mind's conventional thoughts:

> This solution was to leave the poet's mind entirely blank, like the *tabula rasa*…and to make the resultant poem entirely reside in the simultaneous presentation to the consciousness of as many contrasting images as possible, derived openly from, say, one's association with them as one walked through the crowded streets… ("Herald" 821)

The poem would be, then, a phenomenological survey, not an artistically unified product; Fletcher hoped to end up with a series of pictures.

Though the "unrelated method" aims to sever relations only between Fletcher and his conventional perceptions, in practice the exercise serves to disconnect the objects of perception from each other, making for parataxis. In fact, critics, perhaps using the resultant poetry as a

guide, have often assumed the method referred to the apparent lack of relation between the objects presented (De Chasca 193). The method produces a jauntiness of movement; for instance, in "'BUS-TOP," one of Fletcher's "London Excursion" sketches, the poem jumps from view to view:

> Black shapes bending,
> Taxicabs crush in the crowd.
> The tops are each a shining square
> Shuttles that steadily press through the wooly fabric.
>
> Drooping blossom,
> Gas-standards over
> Spray out jingling tumult
> Of white-hot rays.
>
> Monotonous domes of bowler-hats
> Vibrate in the heat.
>
> Silently, easily we sway through braying traffic,
> Down the crowded street.
> The tumult crouches over us,
> Or suddenly drifts to one side. (*1915* 43-44)

Not only does the poem shift suddenly from taxicabs to gas lamps to hats to the traffic, the syntax also changes abruptly. Without any punctuation to mark a shift from the third line, the

fourth line starts anew. Yet the fourth line lacks a verb, and it also refers back not to the third line but to the second – the previous sentence. The suddenness and strangeness of this syntactical change suggests a mind encountering new views and interpretations pell-mell, one after the other, without time to organize them. A similar break in the syntax occurs in the second stanza, between "over" and "Spray": the reader suddenly has to reconfigure "Gas-standards over" as its own linguistic entity rather than leading to an object that follows. With the word "Spray" the poem moves to a new consideration of the gas lamps. These syntactic breaks combine with the flitting eye of the poem to separate the poem into discrete units. While the reader can reconstruct the scene as a view from above, that reader practically lurches from one object or description to the next and sometimes, as mentioned, even back to a previous one.

Fletcher's method influenced not just his own work but also the poetic development of Amy Lowell, who visited London in the summer of 1913 and struck up an artistic friendship with Fletcher and other Imagists. He shared his method with Lowell, and it so impressed her that she took the idea, used it to produce some poems, and later renamed it her "external method." In fact, Lowell's imitation initially startled Fletcher, and threatened to separate them: the impressionistic, roving eye of her "London Thoroughfare" owed a dangerous debt to the technique he had shared with her, and the similarity angered him at first. Yet when Lowell immediately and openly admitted her debt to his process, her flattery pleased him and saved their friendship (De Chasca 42-3). Lowell continued to draw on her Fletcherian "external method" through the rest of her artistic career.

Imagistic parataxis extended beyond the confines of these methods, however. While Fletcher named and practiced his "unrelated method," and Lowell her derivative "external" one, the jarring shifts in view that the technique produced were demonstrated by many Imagists. These writers may not have known of the "unrelated method," but their poems reveal a similar jumpiness. Consider "Cones," by Flint:

The blue mist of after-rain
fills all the trees;

the sunlight gilds the tops
of the poplar spires, far off,
behind the houses.

Here a branch sways
and there
a sparrow twitters.

The curtain's hem, rose-embroidered,
flutters, and half reveals
a burnt-red chimney pot.

The quiet of the room
bears patiently

a footfall on the street. (*1916* 56)

The poem abruptly shifts from outside to inside in the fourth stanza. While the reader may be tempted to integrate the poem within an internal frame, as if the speaker were standing at the window, the third stanza, with its deictic "here" and "there," suggests that the speaker sees the branch and the sparrow locally, not through a pane of glass. Even more, the physical separation of the branch and sparrow on the page (a moment of modest textual parataxis) implies a real world distance; the textual gap implies a change of location, or at least a turn of the head. The curtain brings the poem inside, but in the fifth stanza, the poem moves back outside, but this time to the street, not the forest. More so than "'BUS-TOP," then, the poem resists a stable orientation even as it turns from one object or scene to the next. Its shifts are paratactic, its objects jarringly unrelated, and thus it earns the full visual potential of its concrete language.

H.D.'s poetry is also quite paratactic, with sudden shifts between views. Indeed, Cassandra Laity asserts, in part of a larger argument about Swinburne and Eliot, that H.D.'s poetic technique is informed by film techniques – close ups, montages, abrupt scene cuts. Laity claims that H.D. and Pound have a "imagist/cinematic 'eye'" that manifests "modern filmic modes of attention" (426); in particular, H.D. formulated a "poetic 'cinematic modernism'." H.D. was well-suited to this task: "Schooled from childhood in technologies of the 'eye' by her botanist/astronomer father and oceanographer grandfather, and already regularly attending 'the pictures,' H.D. would later apply her scientifically trained visual imagination toward avant-garde cinema and film criticism in the film journal she helped found, Close-Up (1927-1933)" (428).

This cinematic modernism depends in large part on paratactic shifts. Consider "Oread," in which the intermingling of sea and forest encourage rapid visual cross-cutting. As Laity puts it, "H.D.'s rapid-fire sea/forest intersplicings of cones and circles doubly assail and absorb the

"I"/"eye" in a volley of filmic technique" (428). In other words, the reader's mental eye moves from the sea to the forest as if the reader were watching a quick succession of images; H.D.'s intricate interweaving of language translates visually into back and forth jump-cutting.

Laity further argues that H.D.'s jumpy cinematic techniques reveal the speaker's emotional identity: the reader's "eye" follows and intuits the speaker's "I." For instance, the first two stanzas of "Hermes of the Ways" read:

The hard sand breaks,
And the grains of it
Are clear as wine.

Far off over the leagues of it,
The wind,
Playing on the wide shore,
Piles little ridges,
And the great waves
Break over it. (*1914* 21)

Laity reads these stanzas as a particularly filmic rendering of an emotional progression, a progression "beginning with hypermagnification (tense, painful proximity), followed by the photographic panning across vast spaces (escapist desires), and concluding with a telescoping in on the elementally-submerged minutia of a distant vantage point (fantasies of cool demise)" (433). Whether or not one agrees with the emotional charges attributed to this poetic cinema – one must wonder, for example, why geographic vastness implies escapism rather than desire, ambition, or emotional clarity – , the notion of an underlying visual technique seems more basic

and less disputable. Certainly, the claim that H.D.'s poetic vision was particularly cinematic provides a neat structure for her rampant paratactic shifts.

Parataxis in Imagist Poetics

The paratactic urge in many Imagist poems mirrors (and perhaps grows out of) several aspects of Imagist poetics. Take, for example, Hulme's interest in the Bergsonian distinction between absolute and relative perceptions. As mentioned previously, absolute perception, or intuition, allows one to experience an object in its own right, for what it is as a unique entity; relative perception, or analysis, involves a "translation" in which one object is read as a function of another. One might (carefully) consider these terms in a grammatical context. Parataxis, one might say, exerts a pull toward absolute perception because it denies the subordination of linguistic units; parataxis keeps language objects on the same syntactic level and thus prevents hierarchical organization. In parataxis no language element serves as frame of reference or the basis of "translation" for another; each element appears on its own terms. With "Metro," though the title suggests the frame of reference and the order of elements suggests a tenor-vehicle relation, grammatically the poem resists easy judgment. The absence of "are like" between the phrases keeps, on a purely syntactical level, the terms separate and non-subordinated. Parataxis in Imagist poetry may match up with Bergson's deeper philosophical theory of intuition, and its propagation may reflect the influence of this embedded urge away from analysis and towards the supreme clarity of "absolute" perception.

One should recognize an apt fit between Hulme's philosopho-poetics and later theories about psychological processing and memory for higher-order linguistic units. To apply Marschark and Hunt's (1989) terms to Bergson's, absolute perception creates maximal distinctiveness, while relative perception makes for relational processing. (One might rather say

that relative perception *maintains* relations, since, according to Bergson, analytic translation is our de facto cognitive mode.) The first sees objects in their own right, as *distinctive*; the second sees objects as functions of other objects, as *relational*. Following the parallel terminologies through, absolute perception, when put into language, would maintain image-inducing concreteness effects, while relative perception would not. In its ambitious effort to chase down absolute perception, Hulme's poetics implicitly sponsors the linguistic path towards syntactic distinctiveness and corollary mental imagery.

In another way Imagist poetics may also encourage the use of parataxis. The grammatical coordination of equal clauses without conjunctions denies the narrative mode, and implicitly fosters a sense of simultaneity and instantaneity. As mentioned previously, the gap between the two (nearly) equal terms of "Metro" creates a syntactic and comprehensive impasse that helps arouse the aha! moment of instantaneous insight. Yet in a broader way parataxis implies instantaneousness, or rather, it implies a sense of pictorial simultaneity that itself implies instantaneousness. This all is quite muddled without an example; consider the first two stanzas from the second section of Aldington's "Reflections":

> Ghost moths hover over asphodel;
> Shades, once Lais' peers,
> Drift past us;
> The mist is grey.
>
> Far over us
> The white wave-crests flash in the sun;
> The sea-girls lie upon hot, weedy rocks. (*1916* 13)

Here the parallel structures (e.g., moths, shades, mist) suggest a scene, events that take place all at once within it; the shades do not drift past *after* the moths, or *because* of the moths, or *despite* them, but rather the shades and the moths occupy the same plane. The metaphor of the plane is not incidental: indeed, the lack of narrative hypotactic structure undermines the reader's sense of sequence and suggests that the elements happen at the same time. The poem seems to create a picture into which new elements are projected as the poem progresses; the poem certainly happens in time (the reader reads in time) but the poetic object seems to be a static picture rather than a story. Though this "picture" is only completed at the end of the poem or stanza, it somehow seems to exist as a coherent scene before the reader has assembled it. As Gage insists, the apparent simultaneity of the poetic scene is an illusion, the effect of careful, time-bound rhetorical structures. Yet this effect is still profound.

One should recall here Hulme's particular investment in visual poetics: "A man cannot write without seeing at the same time a visual signification before his eyes. It is this image which precedes the writing and makes it firm." (FS 79) In light of this investment, it is only fitting that the paratactic structures imply a picture: the original visual impulse has made it through to the reader. The paratactic structures imply a picture, a neat corollary to Hulme's necessary pre-composition picture. The question remains, of course, whether the two pictures resemble each other at all. At any rate, the notion of a syntactically-induced pictorial effect neatly mirrors Hulme's insistence on a pictorial impulse – a visual cause – behind writing.

The apparent simultaneity of the poetic "picture" also suggests instantaneity. That is, the achronic, non-narrative structures of the picture suggest that the poem has captured a scene in an instant; the plane of paratactic simultaneity seems to be the flat surface of a high-speed photograph. Such speed, of course, is a hallmark of Pound's definition of the image: "that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time." To Pound, the image

presents its manifold meanings instantly, and therefore, we can infer, at the same time. Whatever its other qualities, the pictorial quality to the image helps frame this instantaneity, however dubious; as a scene, the image can reveal itself all at once, with simultaneous elements and attendant emotions. The paratactic picture suggests that the poet "captured" it all at once.

Certainly, however, the pictorial aspect to the paratactic structures does not limit them to eternal stasis. That is, though the non-narrative elements imply a picture, this picture may change; the scene presented seemingly all at once by the poem may modulate within the reader's mind. To return to "Reflections," for example, as the moths, shades, and mist pile up in paratactic succession, they form a picture, but this picture can shift or even turn to video in the reader's mind. However, as the reader constructs the image mentally, the elements probably remain static, simply because it is hard to mentally image several moving or changing elements at once. The difficulty of multiple imagery changes suggests that the reader will keep each element static through the addition process, and introduce motion only at the end. The verbal motion of the phrases (e.g., the shades "drift past us") implies video, but the completed scene most likely begins its mental life as a fixed picture.

Narrative Order and Hypotaxis in Imagism

Of course, despite the influence of Imagist poetics and the many strong examples for the affirmative, not all Imagist poems are fully paratactic – there are exceptions to the general rule of disconnected, distinctive poetic effects. Some of Amy Lowell's prose poems, for instance, have moments in which the sentences hang together coherently, lulling the reader into gathering information about the larger whole rather than chewing each phrase. In "Walk," for instance, the poem focuses in on boys playing marbles, and stays with them for a few sentences before turning away:

> Over the street the white clouds meet, and sheer away without touching.
>
> On the sidewalk boys are playing marbles. Glass marbles, with amber and blue hearts, roll together and part with a sweet clashing noise. The boys strike them with black and red striped agates. The glass marbles spit crimson when they are hit, and slip into the gutters under rushing brown water. I smell tulips and narcissus in the air… (*1916* 83)

Certainly, this marbles section feels far more like "connected prose" – the type of discourse that may deny concreteness effects – than most Imagist poetry.

But even here the connections are not altogether smooth: the playing boys drop in suddenly from a sentence about the clouds, and after four sentences the boys suddenly disappear as the poem turns to the smell of flowers. Such jumpiness defines Lowell's prose poems, and thus the reader comes to expect that the discourse will suddenly veer off, disconnect. The reader who expects the poem to dart somewhere else will tend to see these sentences as distinctive rather than relational, even if relations could be momentarily established. One might say that Lowell's poetry has psychologically primed readers to distrust the appearance of semantic stability. The four sentences may be topically coherent and flow into each other pretty well, but the larger setting of Lowell's poetry, with all its topical divergence, seriously destabilizes the image-negating coherence.

In strict grammatical terms, some moments of Imagist poetry are obviously hypotactic; these moments of syntactic subordination oppose the strong examples of parataxis. For instance, the second stanza of Fletcher's "Armies" presents a litany of hypotactic phrases, each one increasing the control of the coming independent clause:

Like an enormous snake with undulatory movement,

Past the old church with scarlet ivy hooding its stiff grey walls,

Past the drowsy churchyard,

Where wet leaves cling to the stones,

Up the hill and past the village,

Through the curving lines of hedgerows,

Beyond the brow of the hill, lost in brown stubble,

The brown backs of an army

Go writhing into the distance. (*1917* 51)

Grammatically, the stanza presents eight dependent phrases before the main clause arrives and provides the stanza-sentence with real activity. The reader must wait to see what these clauses are defining, what this sentence is about. (In truth, most readers will probably have a good idea that the clauses define the army, because the first stanza began in a similar way, with dependent phrases leading to "The brown backs of an army." And most readers are not reading the poem for the first time. But the first-time reader does not know for sure.) Grammatically, the sentence is ruthlessly hypotactic.

Despite its obvious grammatical standing as hypotaxis, the imagery effects of this hypotactic moment are ambiguous. Because the reader must wait for the main clause without knowing what it is, the reader cannot relate those phrases to the main clause. This may have multiple (and contradictory) effects for mental imagery. On the one hand, this uncertainty means that the reader probably does not have a clear image in mind: *what* exactly is moving "up the hill and past the village"? Because the reader doesn't know the subject of the sentence, the dependent phrases may be visually amorphous; or the reader simply might not form any images

for these phrases, waiting until the subject appears. On the other hand, because the reader cannot (while reading for the first time) relate the dependent phrases to the main clause, the reader may treat the phrases as distinct units, seeing the scenery but not the army that (one soon learns) is passing through it. The phrases *do* serve the main clause and thus relate to it grammatically, but the order of the sentence keeps that relation unclear for a long time. Indeed, the very number of apposite dependent phrases may create a self-fulfilling mood in which the phrases seem to define only themselves: as they pile up, the reader may suspect that they alone constitute the sentence. Such confusion and repetition may help keep the elements distinctive and thus more likely to be imaged. Further, as mentioned before, not all relations undermine imagery; here, the subordinate phrases provide spatial relations for the main clause (the army), helping the reader form a clear mental scene. In effect, though the stanza is obviously hypotactic and thus relational, in an actual reading the effects of this grammatical status on mental imagery are by no means clear.

Perhaps the most coherent, non-paratactic (in the looser sense of paratactic as disconnected and distinctive) moments within the Imagist oeuvre are its moments of dialogue. There are probably many reasons for this. For one, when we talk, we often want to communicate information, and thus dialogue tends to be straightforward and obedient to the semantic network. On another level, the reader, seeing quotation marks and line-by-line treatment, assumes a stable conversational context and reads quickly for information. In Flint's "Gloom," the speaker is angry at a woman, and they talk about it:

> 'What is the matter with you, dear?' she said.
>
> 'Nothing,' I answered,
>
> 'I am thinking.'

She stroked my hair and went away;

and I was still gloomy, angry, stubborn. (*1916* 58)

Most readers cannot help but gloss over the conversational apparatus ("she said," "I answered") in order to get to the information more quickly: information is paramount here. The reader places the lines in a context of mutual dependence in order to assemble the overall meaning of the exchange; these sentences are not considered on their own. Of course, a particular line of dialogue may be interesting and need to be mulled over, but that interest and consideration always take place in relation to the overall conversational frame. Thus dialogue, while not very common in Imagist poetry, is likely to create a relational network and frustrate mental imagery when it appears.

All in all, however, despite these moments in which the interrelation of parts threatens to sabotage the imageability of its concrete language, Imagism is heavily paratactic and "scrambled" in its discourse. Insofar as Imagist poetry frustrates object and syntactic relations, its concrete language remains distinctive and able to produce more imagery than connected prose or narrative poetry.

Image Metaphor

In addition to its concrete language, which supports a visual response, Imagist poetry further encourages visualization through a key metaphorical structure. This structure links one concrete, imageable term to another concrete, imageable term, as in "Her spread hands are starfish"; cognitive linguists call this subset of metaphor "image metaphor." Image metaphors often make use of similarity of shape or motion (what I call "structural correspondence") as the link between the two objects or scenes, and mental imagery is especially well-suited to take advantage of this structural agreement. As ever, the spatial congruence of image metaphor does not explicitly determine a visual response, but rather makes mental imagery more likely as a mode of comprehension.

This chapter asserts that the structural correspondence underlying many Imagist image metaphors encourages the reader to visualize. Further, readers may spontaneously form a "visual template," a schematic middle ground that accounts for shared structures, in order to smoothly move between the two images elicited by each metaphor. The structural correspondence and the mediating visual template allows readers to mentally "toggle" back and forth between the two images, yet readers cannot fuse the two terms through imagery. Research supports these claims: Ray Gibbs has demonstrated that subjects understand image metaphors primarily through their physical features, and the latest work on the mental interpretation of ambiguous figures suggests that though one cannot fuse images together, one may switch back and forth between multiple images of a figure, especially if the images share the same reference frame. These findings indicate that readers may be particularly likely to understand image metaphor through mental imagery, especially when the terms of the metaphor correspond physically.

Non-Image Metaphors

But first: how common is image metaphor within Imagist poetry? These metaphors should dominate the poetry, given the explicit anti-abstraction policy within the poetic theory. Yet all the same, many poems produced by Imagists do not satisfy the concrete-concrete structure. Often an emotional component takes one side of the structure, barring clear visuals; consider Aldington's "New Love":

> She has new leaves
> After her dead flowers,
> Like the little almond-tree
> Which the frost hurt. (*1915* 15)

Here new leaves apply not to some concrete, easily imaged thing but rather to the experience of finding love after pain. The leaves relate to an emotional state, and emotions, perhaps because felt but not visible, make for tricky cases of concrete reference. (In fact, Paivio notes that emotion words challenge his data patterns: "Another group of words rated as abstract but relatively high *I* were affect labels and other terms implying sense experience other than visual-auditory, e.g., *anger, happiness,* etc." (79). Abstraction normally correlates to low imageability.) New love is hardly a tangible, concrete thing, but new leaves are tangible things: an abstract-concrete pattern. As another example, consider these lines from H.D.'s "Mid-day": "A slight wind shakes the seed-pods. / My thoughts are spent / As the black seeds" (*1916* 30). Here we have another abstract-concrete pattern; thoughts are presented physically, as dispersed seeds. Aldington's poem, H.D.'s lines, and many other examples like them reveal that Imagist practice did not always follow its anti-abstractionist policy, and thus metaphor in Imagism is less exclusively a mode of "image metaphor" than one might have thought.

At other times, confusion of metaphorical reference may sabotage what might otherwise be a simple concrete-concrete rendering. For example, unclear pronouns are often tricky, suggesting either personification or its opposite. In "The River," for example, Aldington begins the third stanza of the first section with an unintroduced pronoun:

> She has come from beneath the trees,
>
> Moving within the mist,
>
> A floating leaf. (*1914* 16)

The reader has to relate "she" and the leaf, and order alone suggests a depersonalizing movement: a woman is presented as a leaf. By this reading, the woman moves with the fluid grace of a leaf in mid-air, though probably more slowly (the mist suggests slowness). Yet at the same time, another reading is possible, one in which the floating leaf retroactively defines the pronoun "she": the leaf has been feminized; the leaf begins as "she," though the reader does not know it at the outset. In this case the original pronoun suggests a person but then merely attaches to an impersonal object.

Such ambiguity of pronominal reference may make the stanza difficult to image. Depending on one's reading, there are either two objects (woman/girl and leaf) or one object (feminized leaf) to consider; correspondingly, either the woman (as leaf) or the leaf alone moves out "from beneath the trees" in the reader's imagination. In the first reading we have an image metaphor, though a somewhat farfetched one – a correspondence of motion between the leaf and the woman. In the second reading we have only a conceptual (i.e., non-imagistic) metaphor: we think of the leaf in some part as a woman, though we do not *see* the leaf in this way. The leaf still looks like a leaf, but it is charged with a female dignity or a broader human import. At any

rate, the fact of the two readings suggests that some image metaphors, especially those involving ambiguous nouns, may be slightly compromised by secondary, non-imagistic readings.

Further, many Imagist poems have very little metaphor at all, image or otherwise. The concrete terms of "Eros and Psyche" – the trains, buses, dirt, and statue – are not developed metaphorically, but rather stand quietly as if they were just elements on a movie set. This sense of setting informs many Imagist poems, and in some like Flint's "Easter," the speaker enters the setting but does not linger on it:

> FRIEND
>
> we will take the path that leads
>
> down from the flagstaff by the pond
>
> through the gorse thickets;
>
> see, the golden spikes have thrust their points through,
>
> and last year's bracken lies yellow-brown and trampled. (*1916* 51)

The speaker and the friend continue traveling through the landscape, watching it unfold before them, without using metaphor to focus or estrange the views. Here sheer sequence trumps figuration as the walkers move fluidly from scene to scene in the park. Such "straight" narrative may be responding to the slightly anti-metaphoric feel (but not philosophical intent) of both Hulme's "absolute" perception and the directive towards the "direct treatment of the 'thing'" (Flint 199). Whatever the impulse, a subset of Imagist poems avoid conspicuous metaphor, image or otherwise, as they render a scene.

Caveats aside, however, Imagist poetry is still strongly marked by image metaphors. Peter Crisp cites them as a key element within the "family resemblance" of Imagism: "Imagist poems frequently centre upon one or more image metaphors. This, I emphasize, is a *prototypical*

property" (82). By "prototypical property," Crisp refers to the theory of categorization based on prototype effects – elements that the prototypes, or best examples, of a category are likely to manifest; therefore, declaring image metaphor a "prototypical property" of Imagism does not make it a necessary, defining feature of Imagism but rather one that adds to a poem's Imagistic qualities. By this account (which, significantly, side-steps publication history as determiner), image metaphor is a strong but not definitive marker of Imagist poetry.

Structural Correspondence

Image metaphor, when it appears, often plays upon similarity of shape, and this congruence fosters a visual "reading" of the metaphor. For instance, the structural correspondence between the moon and a human face in Hulme's "Autumn" helps organize the imagery that the poem produces. The simile (a close relation to metaphor) explicitly directs attention to the way the moon looks on this night:

> A touch of cold in the Autumn night –
> I walked abroad,
> And saw the ruddy moon lean over a hedge
> Like a red-faced farmer.
> I did not stop to speak, but nodded,
> And round about were the wistful stars
> With white faces like town children. (Pound's *Ripostes* 60)

The similar shape of the moon and the face is conventional ("the man in the moon"), and perhaps even culturally determined; this convention suggests that most readers may be primed to visualize the moon as a face. Further, the poem strengthens this correspondence with nearly

synonymous color modifiers – the "ruddy" moon and the "red-faced" farmer – that prod the reader even more towards "seeing" the two items as visual cognates. (This poem matches colors again with the second simile between the stars and the children's faces: presumably, town children (as opposed to farm children) are inside more often and thus their faces remain pale.) Finally, the speaker notes that he "saw" the moon – an explicitly visual cue; such verbal prompting toward the visual is strongly correlated with mental imagery. (More on this prompting later.) The reader, prodded by the speaker's declaration of visual experience, and grasping the explicit similarity of color and the implicit similarity of shape, may be more inclined to register this correspondence through imagery.

For another example, consider Amy Lowell's "Sunshine." It is a short poem, but it manages to impress a sharp image metaphor upon the reader:

> The pool is edged with the blade-like leaves of irises.
> If I throw a stone into the placid water
> It suddenly stiffens
> Into rings and rings
> Of sharp gold wire. (*1917* 80)

The poem presents the water rings created by the stone's impact as solid wire rings, a comparison that makes the rings more coherent, less fluid and moving. In fact, one might see (i.e., image) the changing surface of the water as a series of snapshots: in each another small gold ring appears in the center of the pool and a larger one appears on the outside, pushing outward until they reach the edge or dissipate on their own, perhaps through image overload. The vehicle of the metaphor – the rings of wire – may in fact support the idea of a picture series: the wire is "sharp," which implies not just a tactile sense but a visual crispness as well, which opposes the

inherent blurriness of perceived motion. In other words, the clarity of the wire rings suggests a sharp picture of those rings rather than a fluid expansion outward. In addition, the verb "stiffens" supports the serial rendering — the water is now more solid and motionless than its normal watery self, more like the rings that can be counted out one by one.

The snapshot approach to the image metaphor in "Sunshine" may obscure the motion of the water, but it proves to be a much simpler act of cognition than trying to image the rings moving fluidly outward while simultaneously generating in the center. A series of discrete images implies motion without showing it directly. In itemizing the ways in which authors get readers to imagine objects in motion, Elaine Scarry makes a similar claim for serial images, naming "addition and subtraction" as her third method. That is, when objects are added or subtracted from otherwise still images, the imager appreciates that the change involves motion. Scarry in fact asserts that the serial method can create "frantic motion" – "We rapidly put before the mind a series of still images, and create by doing so a whirl of motion" (101) – but certainly the motion created does not have to be so frenzied. The series of gold rings, for example, does not necessarily demand that the water races outward, though the poem specifies that the water stiffens "suddenly"; the unity and geometric order of each ring may suggest a calm, slow motion for the water.

We must note before leaving "Sunshine" that the reader generates the structural correspondence within its image metaphor. Certainly, the reader always performs acts of visual interpretation; even in "Autumn" the reader chooses to image a full moon (rather than a sickle moon) to correspond to the farmer's face. But in "Sunshine" the reader's role in structural development is even greater. The poem does not specify the arrangement of the rings, and thus a reader could imagine scattered separate rings on the poem's surface. It is only most readers'

lived experience with stones and bodies of water that makes the image of concentric circles far more likely than the image of disconnected rings. That is, the structural correspondence is very likely an integral part of the poetic experience, but the reader's role in creating that correspondence is crucial. Such involvement should not undermine the value of image metaphor, but rather it emphasizes the necessary degree to which the reader's mind synthesizes, supports, and amplifies the textual cues. Even a feature so seemingly objective as structural correspondence depends on the reader's role in providing context and creating meanings.

Though certain modes of mental imagery may only imply (rather than articulate) movement, the structural connection of image metaphor can also be a more pure correspondence of motion. For example, in "The Skaters" Fletcher interweaves the motions of the skaters on the river and the swallows above:

> Black swallows swooping or gliding
> In a flurry of entangled loops and curves;
> The skaters skim over the frozen river.
> And the grinding click of their skates as they impinge upon the surface,
> Is like the brushing together of thin wing-tips of silver. (*1916* 48)

Certainly, there are several non-visual cues that enforce the link between the skaters and the birds. For one, the first phrase ("black swallows swooping…") lacks a verb and thus it seems more tethered to the following independent clause ("the skaters skim…"); the birds seem to depend syntactically on the skaters and thus enter into a tighter relation with the skaters than the semi-colon indicates alone. Further, the simile in the last line connects sounds, tactile sensations, or both. It is hard to determine how the click of the skates relates to wings brushing together, but at any rate the connection is not explicitly visual.

Despite the relevance of these non-visual pointers, the poem may be organized productively through mental imagery. (In fact, I'd be surprised if most readers did *not* experience a visual response to the poem.) The simile already prompts the reader to think of skates as wings, and the motion of the birds in their "entangled loops and curves" serves well for the skaters, too. (I suppose the skaters could be skating in straight lines – down the frozen river perhaps – but this seems unlikely, especially given their explicit connection to the swooping, curving birds.) Both birds and skaters move fluidly, and imaging this motion helps the reader capture this relation more quickly and precisely. For one, curves are extremely difficult to grasp propositionally; after all, it takes complicated mathematical formulas to specify how they work. Yet we all know what curves look like and can call on these mental images. Visualizing the motions rather than logically structuring them makes the comparison more immediate. In another way, imaging helps clarify key differences. Imaging the "swooping or gliding" of birds in flight quickly reveals the freedom of motion they have compared to the skaters: while the skaters "skim" along a plane, the birds make use of three full axes. Visualizing the swallows flying in any direction they want (in fact, *making* the swallows fly in any direction they want) puts the flatness of the skating into sharp relief.

Imaging Image Metaphor

Research supports the premise that readers use the visual imagination to understand image metaphors. Raymond Gibbs asked twenty college students to provide a line-by-line gloss of Andre Breton's Surrealist poem, "Free Union," a poem dominated by image metaphors such as "My wife whose hair is brush fire…whose waist is an hourglass." Gibbs speculated that participants would map concrete images rather than relational information from source to target

domains. That is, students would not use general knowledge of brush fires (including how brush fires interact with their environment) as much as their mental images of brush fires when faced with a metaphor that approaches hair in this way.

Gibbs found that his speculations were justified. He organized responses into seven different categories, and found that most responses (60%) fell into the category of physical transfer: "physical features of X [target] that are based on projection of the physical features of Y [source]" (41). In other words, the "look" of the source domain structures one's reading of the target domain. For example, given the line "My wife whose eyelashes are strokes in the handwriting of a child," one participant wrote, "Her eyelashes are thick, long as if they were single strokes of a child's writing or painting" (40). The second largest category (28%) was "associations about X based on Y," which were based primarily on the physical features of the source; for instance, given "whose waist is an hour glass," one respondent wrote "She has a Barbie doll figure." Relational transfer, as in "Her eyelashes are original, pure, and innocent" following the "handwriting" line, was quite rare (8%) (40).

Gibbs then pressed this inquiry further by working to separate mental images from general knowledge. He asked twenty new participants to describe their mental images for individual target and source domains that were presented randomly; twenty others had to describe the "main characteristics" of those domains, again presented randomly. Given the phrase "nests of swallows" (the source domain in the line "Whose eyebrows are nests of swallows"), the imagers came up with what the nest was made of (twigs, straw, grass), where it was located (trees, rafter of old house), what it looks like (circular, delicate), what was inside the nest (birds waiting to be fed, eggs), and what the swallows were doing (chirping, singing) (42). Those who described their knowledge of "nests of swallows" produced evaluative comments

about birds (cute birds, unsanitary, alert), associations (birthplace, shelter, home, sanctuary, security), and some image-like features, though vaguer than what the imagers produced. Gibbs found that 58% of the mental images of the source domain corresponded to the readings from the first study, while only 21% of the knowledge of the source domain corresponded (42). Further, since 59% of the correspondent knowledge was identical to the correspondent imagery, Gibbs reasoned that really "only 12% of the non-imagistic, characteristic knowledge that people have about source domain gets mapped during comprehension of image metaphors" (42).

These clarifying phases of the experiment suggest that people use their mental images of the source domain much more than general or relational knowledge of the source domain to comprehend image metaphors. More generally, this study speaks to the power of mental imagery overall in the process of interpreting image metaphor. As Gibbs summarizes, "These studies most generally illustrate the importance of concrete mental images in the interpretation of poetic metaphor and suggest how metaphor theories must be amended to account for the prominence of imagery in metaphor use" (37).

It is important to note a key difference between the image metaphors that Gibbs investigated and those discussed in this project. The poem that Gibbs used in his study, "Free Union," moves from image metaphor to image metaphor, line after line; the poem does not develop these metaphors as scenes. In contrast, poems such as "The Skaters" create richer, more complex relationships, often with multiple figure-ground relations. This complexity makes a simple, one-shot "mapping" of physical features less likely than with the one-line examples; the complexity and subtlety of the extended image metaphors often leaves the direction of any such mapping obscure. Yet these metaphors still rely on concrete-concrete relations, so Gibbs's findings on the primacy of mental imagery in the comprehension of image metaphor still apply.

Further, these more complex metaphors, I argue, evince a richer alignment of structures that provokes a complex imagistic response.

The Visual Template

As an example of this richer structural correspondence, consider again "In a Station of the Metro." As noted earlier, the "textual parataxis" of the poem's spacing (upon initial publication) suggests the visual experience of discrete units scattered against a more disordered background. Such a structure, if visualized, works especially well for the poem because it provides a visual template for both lines – both the faces and the petals stand out against their mottled backgrounds, the crowd and the bough. This visual template is schematic – more abstract and sketched out than a detailed scene; otherwise, it would not support both of the images prompted by the two lines. But if sufficiently schematic, this template can help organize the multiple images by streamlining both images down to the common structure, and the reader can move between the two quickly, enjoying a rich visualized comparison.

Such a structure is not merely a useful heuristic for an ambitious visualizer; rather, the poem's two "scenes," because they correspond well in terms of structure, seem to prompt this sort of template. (Pound's experience of "splotches" only adds strength to this notion of a unifying template.) Each line defines a separate figure-ground relation, so there is an immediate structural similarity at play. Further, the figures seem well-matched: petals are more unified and non-defined ("splotchy") than faces, but these faces lose definition through the situational descriptor, "apparition"; the notion of "apparition" lends the faces a vagueness or gauziness that turns them toward petals. Finally, the two grounds (the crowd in the station and the bough) also correspond through connotation and mental image. Crowds are mottled and jumbled, and a

bough that is wet and black is most likely decaying, clotted with the structural disorder of death – both look choppy and incoherent. In addition, as many critics have noted, the Metro's location underground (as well as the ghostly ring of "apparition") points to Hades and the underworld, which serves to strengthen the connection to the dark, decaying bough.

It is important to note that this template does not unify the disparate scenes or images. Rather, the template provides a common structure so that each can be considered in turn; using the schematic visual of discrete shapes (ovals, perhaps) against a jumbled background allows the reader to switch between the two scenes quickly. The template is not a brute combination of the two images; it is not a superposition of one image on top of the other. Rather, it operates as a sort of greatest-common-factor schema, isolating the most detailed characteristics that are shared by both.

(Re)Interpreting Ambiguous Figures

Images such as the Necker cube or Jastrow's duck/rabbit prove useful as analogies for this template. Drawings like these, known in Gestalt psychology as "ambiguous figures," are single pictures that may be seen in two separate ways: the Necker cube has two different top segments depending on how one scans the image, and Jastrow's figure can be viewed as either a duck or a rabbit. What's important here is that the figures have one structure that supports both visual readings. The structure allows viewers to "toggle" between images but, significantly, viewers cannot see both images at the same time.

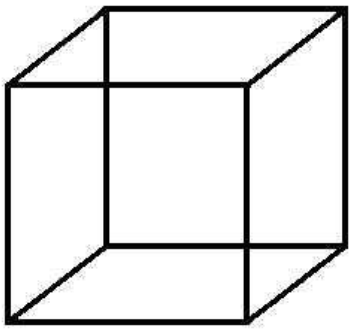

Figure 1: Necker cube

Given the strong correlation between perception and imagery, the ambiguous figures help mark the limits of the visual imagination. They reveal that the mind cannot "fuse" two images by seeing them at the same time, no matter how structurally similar (or even equivalent); the mind sees one and then the other. This failure to fuse multiple images of the ambiguous figure is relevant for image metaphor: if one cannot fuse two images that have exactly the same structure, how could one fuse two structurally different (though *correspondent*) images – the two terms of image metaphor? Our inability to see doubly implies an inability to image doubly. Of course, though imagery and perception may share fundamental cognitive processes, they are not equivalent, and many thinkers have attempted to find out exactly what ambiguous figures can tell us about imagery processes.

Some research suggests that while ambiguous figures modulate during perception, the figures do not modulate once imaged. Chambers and Reisberg (1985) discovered that when subjects imaged Jastrow's duck/rabbit figure, they did not experience reversals of its form. The researchers concluded that image reinterpretation (that is, a reversal of the figure within imagery) may not be possible. In other words, an image may be tied to an initial interpretation of its form that prevents creative re-imagining. On its surface, this research seems problematic for the possibility that the visual template allows toggling. As we shall see, the case is more intricate than it may appear.

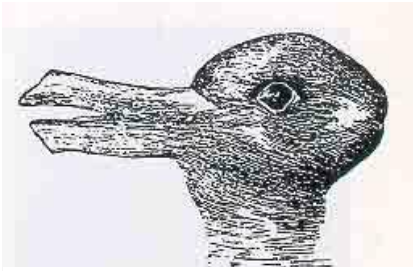

Figure 2: Duck/rabbit figure

Mary Peterson and her colleagues (1992) assert, for example, that Chambers and Reisberg oversimplified the case of ambiguous figures. Peterson et al. hold that image reversals are of two kinds: reconstruals and reference-frame realignments. In the first, one only creates a new interpretation to image components; in the second, one mentally reconfigures the global

directions, such as top/bottom and front/back. (E. G. Boring's "wife/mother-in-law" figure involves only part-based reconstrual – the wife's jaw becomes the mother-in-law's nose, but the global directions are in general preserved; the Necker cube demands only reference-frame realignment; the duck-rabbit figure entails both types of reversals.) In flat opposition to Chambers and Reisberg, Peterson et al. found that mental images of all types can be ambiguous, though some may be more susceptible to reversal than others. Significantly, the researchers discovered that subjects experience reconstruals of imagery more easily than reference-frame realignments: "these experiments indicate that the structural aspects of an image may be separated less easily from the reference frame in which they are specified than from the interpretation assigned within that reference frame" (119). Peterson et al. show that the duck-rabbit figure necessitates a difficult reference-frame realignment in addition to reconstrual; therefore, Chambers and Reisberg's claim against image reinterpretation in general ignores the relative ease of reconstrual alone within mental imagery. What's more, the researchers found that participants asked to reverse mental images were highly susceptible to hints and strategies. Overall, Peterson et al. demonstrate, contra Chambers and Reisberg, that mental images *can* be reversed, some more easily than others.

Figure 3: Boring's figure

Ronald Finke (1990) has also challenged Chambers and Reisberg's finding against mental reinterpretation. Finke claims that his own personal experiences (and those of his colleagues) suggest that new perceptual relations can emerge during imagery; he therefore sought "to demonstrate that it was, in fact, possible to detect novel patterns in an image and to re-interpret an image in unexpected ways" (9). Finke set out to devise experimental tasks that

would reveal the "emergent" patterns of imagery. If imagery has "emergent" properties, this flexibility would support the notion that switching is possible for the case of image metaphor.

But Finke's research, unfortunately, is ancillary to the question he began with; his experimental procedure pulls his research away from the question of image re-interpretation. Instead of working with ambiguous figures as discrete units, Finke looked for evidence of reinterpretation when separate images are modified and joined together. He offers an example: "Try imagining the capital letter 'H'. Now imagine superimposing the capital letter 'X' directly over the 'H', such that the four corners of each letter overlap. Can you now detect any new shapes or forms resulting from the superimposed letters?" (10). Finke notes that subjects offered up such answers as "butterfly," "bow-ti.e.," "the letter M." Yet these answers, though "emergent," do not speak to image re-interpretation – the combinatorial process misses the real question of whether some *single* figure can be seen in multiple ways. Finke has moved from singular to plural: from novel patterns in "an image" to patterns discovered from "simple, familiar shapes and forms being combined and transformed in various ways" (9). Therefore, Finke's findings do not really challenge Chambers and Reisberg's conclusion that ambiguous figures cannot be reinterpreted through mental imagery.

Finke's research does help clarify the case of visualized image metaphor, though. Together with Chambers and Reisberg, the two sets of findings offer frameworks for thinking about the visual template and how it functions within the imagination. Finke's procedure, for one, asked subjects to "superimpose" one letter over another, which should not be possible for the two iterations of the visual template. (One can toggle between iterations but not fuse them.) Yet this superimposition did not demand that two figures occupy the same space simultaneously, other than small overlaps in the corners and the middle. The two figures are so different that the

superimposition does not necessitate structural compromise or re-figuring. More importantly, perhaps, when Finke's procedure does lead to superimposition (as in placing a capital B over a capital D), the superimposition is only possible because the overlapped elements are exactly the same: both are thin, most likely black, lines. A better test of superimposition might be an orange B and a blue D, or a smooth metal B and a rough wooden D – can those be combined yet each retain their distinctive visual elements? Surely not. The color or texture mapping comes closer to the actual task of the image metaphor, with its two distinct iterations, and suggests that Finke's superimposition findings do not speak to the "fusion" of rich, discrete images.

The case (though disputed) of true ambiguous figures is perhaps more instructive. For one, Peterson et al.'s finding that part-based reconstrual is more common than reference-frame realignment bodes well for the visual template. When working from the template readers do not have to alter the global directions of the image; what they do more closely compares to a reinterpretation of parts than a reorientation of the object. In truth, fixed parts are not reinterpreted, but rather different sets of parts stand in for each other. Yet overall the parts of the template adhere to a constant frame of reference while the reader visualizes the parts differently.

What's more, though the visual template matches up well with Peterson's distinction among reversals, it can still accommodate the broad claim that mental images cannot be reversed at all. Though Chambers and Reisberg assert that subjects cannot easily "toggle" between versions of ambiguous figures, their findings do not account for the key difference between an ambiguous figure and the visual template: articulation. That is, even if we ignore Peterson et al.'s challenge to Chambers and Reisberg, even if we assert, ignoring new findings, that mental imagery cannot be reinterpreted, the fact of articulation separates the visual template from

ambiguous figures. The visual template is the structural intermediary between two richer images, and thus it points in two visually distinct directions. Crucially, in distinction to an ambiguous figure, the image metaphor template demands an active filling-in of details, and thus does not entail a reversal or reinterpretation so much as a re-articulation. The template model seems to combine the structural simplicity and singularity of one (basic) image with the distinct articulations of two different images.

There are some additional differences. Though I have named the template "it," and suggested that it "points in two directions," there may be no there there: the template may be nothing other than the abstracted combination of those two images, a set of coordinates made manifest only through the two different versions. There are two consequences here. First, the visual template is necessarily double and only exists in combination, while the ambiguous figure is not (one might see only one view). Second, ambiguous figures certainly exist, though the template may not.

The Impossible Dream of Fusion

At any rate, the most important aspect of the analogy with ambiguous figures - the impossibility of fusing multiple and distinct ways of seeing - still stands. Like the ambiguous figures, visual templates do not permit simultaneous views of different images. Certainly, the mind can *mingle* images, and place petals against the crowd (or any other figure-ground cross-matching), but it cannot combine the images so that faces and petals form a new image with all the features of both. This limitation productively challenges the common critical assumption that Imagist metaphors unite their terms visually.

Peter Crisp, for example, makes a straightforward claim for fusion; discussing Hulme's "Autumn," he writes, "the reader is led to see the moon distinctly and to see it simultaneously as a red-faced farmer" (85). Not all claims are so clear. Susan Stanford Friedman argues that psychological condensation in H.D.'s "Oread" helps achieve a "fusion of land and sea" (57). Certainly, this fusion could be psychological or conceptual; there are multiple contexts for the integration of poetic objects, and some are clearly non-visual. But Friedman argues that the poem's semantic distortions arise from the "picture-making mode of thought," and continues: "The speaker does not say that a rough sea looks *like* pointed trees; she sees tree-waves…the poem conjures an illustration of non-rational reality" (57). Insofar as this "illustration" is visual, the lesson of the ambiguous figures suggests that the illustration will be unable to accommodate the two images simultaneously. Structural correspondence may organize images, but it cannot unite them.

Many critics, in contrast to Crisp and Friedman, have recognized this inability for metaphor or correspondence to fuse distinct elements. Remy de Gourmont, an intensely pro-visual writer and critic who proved quite influential for the Imagists, believes in the creative, artistic power of metaphor but scoffs at the idea that the two terms can be visually united. De Gourmont quotes Flaubert ("The elephants…the spurs on their chests like the prows of ships cut through the cohorts; they rolled back in great waves") to illustrate the impossibility of simultaneous seeing; he notes that the combination – strictly, an image metaphor – is "visually absurd," producing a "double and cloudy sensation." De Gourmont cites this absurdity and cloudiness in order to proclaim the triumph of literature over painting; literary metaphor can express combinations that painters are unable to commit to canvas: "Try to represent the image of elephant-prows, of cohort-waves, visually! You would need a stormy sea which was a real

sea and yet one not made of waves, but of soldier's chests and heads; and elephants who, whilst still remaining elephants, would also be ships" (qtd. in Furbank 36). In effect, De Gourmont's artistic turf battle helps reveal that metaphors can be fused in language but not in image, whether that image is painted or visualized.

Interestingly, de Gourmont implies that the "confusion" and incommensurability of Flaubert's two elements is what prevents the metaphorical terms from being fused. He writes, "What he [Flaubert] gives us is not two designs fitting symmetrically one over the other, but the confusion…of a double and cloudy sensation" (36). De Gourmont implicitly recognizes what this chapter has been investigating – structurally correspondent image metaphor – but he fallaciously suggests that a proper fit between terms could prevent the confusing cloudiness of visually distant terms; though he does not state so explicitly, de Gourmont implies that "two designs fitting symmetrically" might find better visual results than the discordant elephant-prow and soldier-waves. We know, however, from our study of ambiguous figures, that no amount of correspondence could effect a visual fusion; the result will always be, at some level, a "double and cloudy sensation" because multiple elements simply cannot fuse.

Similar to de Gourmont, Pound at times implies a visual fusion but ultimately asserts a separation of terms. In his "Vorticism" essay Pound takes time to investigate the relation of visual and linguistic comparison; he declares that the beauty of two painted objects exceeds their mutual resemblance and involves the more complicated aspect of "planes in relation." But what about poetry – does it succeed through metaphorical resemblance, a symmetry of images, an implicit union of terms? Pound rejects this assumption, quoting Barzun's famous question "Pourquoi doubler l'image?" In other words, the poet should focus on presenting a single image, not a fused one, to the reader. Pound in fact warns against "doubling or confusing an image" and

his language is quite sensitive to the fallacy of visual fusion. Consider his delicacy here: "Still the artist, working in words only, may cast on the reader's mind a more vivid image of either the armour or the pine by mentioning them close together or by using some device of simile or metaphor" (*GB*147). Note that the metaphor makes *one* image – "either the armour or the pine" – more vivid rather than joining the two images together. The comparison effectively serves one of the terms visually instead of creating a confusing composite image.

Pound stretches the limits of implication with his notion of "super-position." A superposition, according to Pound, is "one idea on top of another"; Pound defines the term in the context of a "one-image" poem such as "Metro" (*GB* 89). In other words, one *idea* superimposed on another *idea* can create a single image. Here Pound skirts the dangerous implication that two images can combine to form a single image, but the substitution of ideas for images does not explain very much. The relation of idea to image is certainly confusing, as is the relation of one idea to another: how is one idea placed "on top" of another? (Merely physically, on the page?) Does the image grow out of the ideas, or their visual correspondences? Further, the numbers seem off: how does one plus one equal one? Does the image fuse multiple ideas together?

On this last point we must recall Gage's insight that the Imagists spoke of the image both as a single visual scene and as the combination of scenes; that is, what seems to be faulty math could work out, given the flexibility of the term in Imagist usage. The combinatory meaning of the image exonerates Pound from the charge of fusion, the charge that he believes it possible to unite two ideas in a single visual scene. That is, the image may well be (confusingly) multiple. This allowance does not solve the question of inexplicable translation (how do ideas become images?) but it does head off the problematic idea of visual unification. Indeed, in some ways

the combinatory image seems quite like the "visual template" in that it invokes the relation of two discrete images; certainly, the template is more of an abstracted middle ground than the combinatory image, but both refer outward toward two different scenes.

The visual template that I am describing allows readers to move between the two imaged scenes but does not unify them. The reader of "Metro," prompted by structural correspondence to conceive of the lines as parallel figure-ground images, organizes each image in terms of the common template, and then can switch back and forth between these structurally similar images easily. The template, having performed its organizing function, drops away (if it ever truly existed apart from the two visualized scenes); the reader can visualize one context and then the other, watching as faces become petals and petals turn back into faces. The analogy to the ambiguous figures is strong but not perfect: while the ambiguous figures turn as the viewer changes spatial perspective, the imaged scenes switch back and forth as the visualizer changes key details within the shared structure. In other words, the reader who "sees" one image and then the other in quick succession does not look at the same image differently, but rather articulates the same structure differently, filling in one set of details or the other.

Again, we must acknowledge that the structural correspondence of "Metro" or "Autumn" does not necessarily produce the Necker cube-like visual switching, or even any mental imagery at all, for that matter. However, the structural similarities most likely help organize the visual response when it occurs, guiding the reader toward a comparison of the two from a similar (mental) vantage point.

At this point a major objection may appear, one anticipated in the previous discussion of Lowell's "Sunshine." That is, the notion of structural correspondence implies an essential, in-the-text similarity of forms, a native similarity that does not depend on the structuring activities performed by the reader's mind. Such an assumption can be dangerous, given the mind's powerful ability to create relations and similarities from disparate things; that is, the mind may simply create the correspondence rather than respond to the correspondence already within the poem. For example, the first stanza of Lawrence's "Brooding Grief" points to the reader's ability to make a relation intelligible:

> A YELLOW leaf from the darkness
>
> Hops like a frog before me —
>
> — Why should I start and stand still? (*1916* 74)

Obviously enough, a leaf does not normally hop "like a frog." Yet the reader, if imaging this simile, soon visualizes a leaf, perhaps blown by the wind, moving with little jumps away from the speaker. Guided by the simile, the reader *makes* the leaf's motion similar to the frog's motion. In other words, perhaps the reader actively creates a correspondence between the two items rather than merely organizing a pre-existing correspondence into optimal form.

Despite the powerful creative ability of readers, however, we must recognize that some image metaphors are more structurally well-matched than others. Both the farmer's face and the moon in "Autumn," for instance, are round and equally positioned (according to the speaker's perspective) above the hedge. Both the skaters and the birds make fluid, curving motions against a bare, expansive backdrop (sky or ice). Both faces and petals stand out as small, discrete units against a jumbled background. What is key here is that not all image metaphors manifest

correspondent structures. If "Metro" had been written (and here I commit aesthetic heresy for comparative purposes) "The apparition of these faces in the crowd: / Sand on a wet, black bough," the reader would have to perform far more inventive, difficult visualization in order to see one and the other as visual cognates – the figures are very different in shape. And this revision, while heretical, still retains the similar jumbled grounds of the crowd and bough; had I also reduced the similarity of backdrop, the two images would have been even more difficult to place in a clear visual relation.

So: there is a middle ground between pure formalism (the text *contains* the similar structures) and pure constructivism (the reader *creates* all similarity), and in this middle ground a basic structural congruence in the text is developed and strengthened by the reader's interpretation. Similarity both pre-exists and increases through the reader's semantic strategies. The argument presented here holds that pre-existing structural correspondence prompts a visual template, a visual interpretation that organizes and further develops the pre-existing correspondence. The correspondence is suggested in the poem, but comes to fruition within the reader, who follows the poem's structural prompts and comes to visually articulate the congruence.

The tendency for structurally-correspondent image metaphors to elicit visual imaging certainly bears on Imagist poetry, flush as it is with these metaphors, but it also bears on poems far outside Imagism's purview. What else but an image metaphor, after all, do we find in the first four lines of John Donne's poem "The Ecstasy"?

Where, like a pillow upon a bed,

A pregnant bank swelled up to rest

The violet's reclining head,

Sat we two, one another's best. (121)

The pillow and the swollen bank act as visual cognates, inviting the reader to see one and then the other. (Admittedly, the syntax here is grandly hypotactic, but the strength of the metaphor most likely overcomes the image-denying verbal interrelations.) Over three hundred years later, Auden's deceptively simple opening stanza to "As I Walked Out One Evening" likewise encourages readers to mentally image:

As I walked out one evening,

Walking down Bristol Street,

The crowds upon the pavement

Were fields of harvest wheat. (197)

The metaphor encourages readers to see the crowds, probably dense in the post-work rush or full of walkers taking in the twilight air, as a thickly packed field of grain. Certainly, the metaphor suggests many non-visual interpretations – that the crowds are simultaneously dehumanized and restored to a more "natural" setting than the city; that the speaker feels disconnected from other people – but these interpretations are only heightened by the structural correspondence between the metaphorical terms. The reader who images the crowd and the field, and then mentally switches between them through the mediation of a visual template, is likely to experience the true surprise of the comparison both visually and conceptually. We see, therefore, that it is image metaphor at large, not some specifically Imagist version of it, that solicits a visual accounting; the insights of psychological research apply to any poetry with structurally correspondent image metaphors.

Prompting

In addition to concrete diction, parataxis, and corresponding structures, Imagist poetry also makes use of visual prompting. Simply stated, poems that refer implicitly or explicitly to the act of seeing "prompt" visual imagery in their readers, making imagery more likely as a response. This prompting will not influence all readers, but it will help spark imagery in many readers. Significantly, these textual prompts work in conjunction with concrete language and other visually-weighted features; the prompts encourage visualization for poetry that is already primed for it.

This chapter begins with the premise that certain words automatically urge a reader to image, and that texts implicitly guide the reader's imagination. In addition to these prompts, however, Imagist poetry is rife with moments of "directed seeing," explicit references within the poem to the act of seeing; given the implicit textual guidance provided by the poem, the poem's speaker effectively instructs the reader with these sight references to mentally image what the speaker "sees." Experimental research supports the notion of visual prompting: when subjects are instructed to form images, the otherwise low imagers of the group produce strong imagery effects (and most likely use imagery, though this is empirically unverifiable at present). The poetic speaker's de facto instructions to "see" are powered by a similar, though less explicit, element of prompting that promotes mental imagery in readers.

Visual Words

We should note at the outset that some words seem to visually "prompt" the reader more than others. Certainly, we have investigated this at length in terms of concrete language and

even "vision" words (especially nouns that invoke parts of the brain's visual areas) but we should acknowledge that some words seem to depend on visual perception or imagery for their meaning. Consider "glistening" or "shiny" for example: more so than even a concrete noun like "Rottweiler" or "fork," these adjectives seem to generate their meanings primarily (and perhaps solely) through visual mechanisms. What concepts, after all, can one apply to "glistening" to render it meaningful on a propositional level? The force of these adjectives seems to come almost exclusively from the mental images they stimulate. Collins notes that some adjectives specify spatial relationships for the imagery system: "Adjectives, besides representing detached accidents of the nouns they modify, often add spatial extension to them and provide the imager with precise instructions on how to simulate eye movements, as in: *spiral* staircase, *sinuous* stream, *craggy* mountain range, *tall* tree, *long* road, and so on" (116, emphasis in original). This visual essence, both for textural and spatial cues, is not limited to adjectives – the nouns "patina" and "oval," for example, probably work in a very similar way.

Such an explicitly visual thrust appears occasionally in Imagist poems. In Fletcher's "The Unquiet Street," for example, the poet describes the street thus:

> On rainy nights
>
> It dully gleams
>
> Like the cold tarnished scales of a snake (*1916* 42)

The dull gleam of the rain-soaked street calls on the visual imagination to "see" it; the reader would be hard-pressed to understand the gleam through concepts alone. Further, the adjective "tarnished" exerts a significant visual pressure. Though "tarnished" carries more conceptual weight (in terms of general degradation and even moral decline) than a more purely visual adjective like "glistening," "tarnished" still calls on the visual imagination, especially in the

context of an image metaphor linking gleaming street to scaly snake. More than anything else, though, the dull gleam calls on the visual imagination to image a particular effect of reflected light.

In "Chalfont St. Giles," Flint offers another example of this phenomenon, though it is so quick that one might easily miss it. The poem describes a crumbling cemetery and the flora that has overgrown the graves and vaults, and then focuses in on this particular scene:

> And over the vaults
> lean the great lilac bushes
> with their heart-shaped leaves
> and their purple and white blossom. (*1916* 61)

How else can one understand the "heart-shaped leaves," except if through the visual imagination? Certainly, the description might suggest a few higher-order concepts: visual interpretation, in that human describers have ascribed a particular shape (itself a symbolic interpretation of the human organ) to what is no doubt an imperfect floral iteration of it; literary precedent, given Whitman's earlier description of a lilac bush with heart-shaped leaves in "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd"; and perhaps love and generalized affect, read in the "heart" shape to the leaves. But these are distant and secondary considerations, quite removed from the immediate visual reckoning of the shape itself. At base, the reader will have to image the shape of these leaves in order to grasp the scene as described in the poem.

These examples indicate that some very particular descriptions depend almost exclusively on the visual imagination for their comprehension. One has trouble approaching them conceptually because they often lack significant meaning on that level. Rather, these descriptions offer such strong imagery cues that mental imagery seems to be the most plausible

mode of interpretation. We must acknowledge that these types of (exclusively) visual descriptions are quite rare, and that the impetus to image poetic scenes generally depends on other mechanisms.

Narrative Prompting

In addition to these rabidly visual textual prompts, there is another, more widespread type of prompting – narrative prompting – which denotes the ways in which a text guides the reader's imagination. Sometimes this narrative prompting is explicit; the text actually asks the reader to imagine a scene. In *Henry V*, for example, Shakespeare has his chorus instruct the watcher/listener (or reader) in what to imagine; the prologue to Act III begins thus:

> Thus with imagin'd wing our swift scene flies,
> In motion of no less celerity
> Than that of thought. Suppose that you have seen
> The well-appointed King at Hampton pier
> Embark his royalty; and his brave fleet
> With silken streamers the young Phoebus fanning.
> Play with your fancies; and in them behold
> Upon the hempen tackle ship-boys climbing;
> Hear the shrill whistle which doth order give
> To sounds confused; behold the threaden sails,
> Borne with th'invisible and creeping wind…(III, 1-35)

It is no accident that Shakespeare has larded this section with explicit imagery instructions; in the absence of actors to create visual scenes on the stage, the directions of the Chorus urge the

audience to create images internally. The text implies that the visual sequence of the play should continue on in the minds of the audience members, and the text provides unflinching orders to achieve this visual continuity.

Yet not all textual prompts to visualize are so explicit. In *Dreaming by the Book*, Elaine Scarry gives serious attention to a more ecumenical mode of narrative prompting. In her chapter, "The Place of Instruction," Scarry gives a strong account of the implicit, widespread side of prompting – that is, the implicit textual instructions that an author puts forth and a reader follows. Scarry holds that subtle authorial instructions guide readers, making their mental images more vibrant than ordinary, self-directed daydreams; authors continually prompt their readers to image what is being described. It is important to note that Scarry does not argue for mental imagery, but flatly assumes it as intrinsic to the reading experience.

The claim for authorial instruction invokes the title of her book: "The vibrancy of perception—the rush of color, the spill of light, the thrilling density or discontinuity of sound—is less likely to be duplicated during undirected daydreaming than when dreaming-by-the-book…under authorial direction" (31). In other words, the author's cues and descriptive techniques make readers "see" images better than they could have seen them on their own. Unlike the "visual" words, these techniques are not simply lexical, but also involve the ordering of descriptive passages and shifts of perception; Scarry investigates imagery at the level of narration. Scarry insists that the reader who responds to the author's prompts still voluntarily creates these images, but that the reader is less aware of this volitional practice. Such a suppression of awareness staves off the (vaguely) problematic consequences of awareness: "direction comes about to suppress our awareness of the voluntary, which interferes with the mimesis of perception" (31).

Scarry argues that authorial direction in poetry and prose comes about through "erased imperatives," directions that the author does not specify but the reader nonetheless follows. These imperatives precede the descriptions, and they urge the reader to attend in specific ways to what is coming. For a clarifying example of this process, Scarry pencils back in these "erased imperatives" for the opening paragraph of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*:

> On an evening in the latter part of May [*picture this*] a middle-aged man was walking homeward from Shaston to the village of Marlott, in the adjoining Vale of [*hear the names*] Blakemore or Blackmoor. [*Look closely at the walker's legs*.] The pair of legs that carried him were rickety, and there was a bias in his gait which inclined him somewhat to the left of a straight line. [*Let your eyes drift up to his face now*.] He occasionally gave a smart nod, as if in confirmation of some opinion, [*drift now to the region of his skull*] though he was not thinking of anything in particular. (36-37)

In an even closer reading, Scarry goes on to further subdivide the second sentence, noting that the reader is cued to picture the walker's legs for how they bear his weight, to see his affected motion, and to watch him lean to one side by "superimposing a geometric feature into the midst of this representational picture" (37). In short, close fictive description prompts the reader to mentally image the present description and anticipate what is coming next. The reader responds to the author's instructions by intuitively shifting mental attention from cue to cue, changing the vantage point as appropriate and perhaps even (as with the superimposed geometric figure) recruiting internal figures to help make sense of a textual prompt.

Without being too critical, we might modify Scarry's notion of erased imperatives slightly. For it is clear that the reader usually takes the direction to image something *as* that object is presented, not before: the reader does not know what to look for before the author presents it. Certainly, in some situations (e.g., when one reads "village of…" and then expects to hear the name) the reader can anticipate the cue, so the instruction does seem to proceed the actual naming of the object; many of these exceptions will be syntactically motivated in that the flow of language will prompt certain expectations of sequence. Yet in general, the instruction will occupy the same space as the actual object the reader is instructed to note — the object *is* the cue; description automatically urges visualization. Scarry's notion of precedence is surely a convenient shorthand, a way to show the tacit instructions without trying to navigate their exact, and inconvenient, moment of appearance. Moreover, if Scarry had placed the instructions after the scenes (e.g., "The pair of legs [*Look closely at the walker's legs*]"), the cue seems redundant, as if the reader, having understood the phrase, now decides to image the phrase as an extra point of interest. The notion that erased imperatives precede description, while flawed, at least comes closer to showing that instructions to image are implicit in the text, not received after the fact.

Scarry's notion of instructed image-making is general – it does not depend upon prompting that is explicitly visual in nature. Her "erased imperatives" serve description at large such that any descriptive phrase is simultaneously a command to perform a mimesis of perception, often visual perception. The idea of erasure speaks to this intrinsic and general instruction: though they have been removed, the author's cues were there originally and their traces guide the reader's experience. Scarry simply takes for granted that a descriptive text is an instructive one.

According to Scarry, then, most Imagist poetry instructs the reader to look and see what is being described. Remembering her treatment of *Tess*, one can imagine how many visual prompts Scarry would note, or (following the logic of erasure) reinscribe, in the first stanza of Aldington's "Dawn":

> The grim dawn lightens thin bleak clouds;
>
> In the hill clefts beyond the flooded meadows
>
> Lies death-pale, death-still mist. (*1917* 10)

Nearly every noun would be preceded by [*see this thing*] or [*look closely at*]. Further, the reader would likely be directed to attend to geographic distance: to see the hills (and their clefts) far away, then the meadows in the foreground, and then finally the mist in the distant hills. The stanza constantly urges the reader to follow along visually, to see.

Directed Seeing

Many Imagist poems do the "erased imperatives" one better: they directly refer to the act of seeing and thus encourage the reader to participate in the speaker's explicitly visual experience. H.D. begins "Priapus" with a strong, flat declaration of sight:

> I saw the first pear
>
> As it fell.
>
> The honey-seeking, golden-banded,
>
> The yellow swarm
>
> Was not more fleet than I,
>
> (Spare us from the loveliness!)
>
> And I fell prostrate,

Crying,

Thou hast flayed us with thy blossoms;

Spare us the beauty

Of fruit trees! (*1914* 24)

The speaker's first verb baldly invokes the power of seeing; the first two lines seem to cast the speaker as a witness, someone who can only try to register what she has seen. The poem does not just document the pear's fall, but rather foregrounds the act of seeing it fall; such foregrounding adds emotional weight to the fall while marking the act of seeing as somehow crucial. The act of witness charges the rest of the stanza, so that even its emotional laments ("Spare us from the loveliness!") seem derived from that key first sighting. It seems likely that readers who attend to the importance of seeing will feel encouraged to visualize the moving event that the speaker has described.

Imagist poems invoke the sense of sight in various ways. The most basic seems to be the mode of the last example – a clear declaration of the speaker's act of seeing. Lawrence provides another example; "In Trouble and Shame" begins, "I look at the swelling sunset / And wish I could go also / Through the red doors…." (*1916* 73). Again, the poem begins with the act of seeing, which primes the reader to visualize both that scene and the following ones. In "Ogre," Flint shows a passive variation of this mode: "Through the open window can be seen / the poplars at the end of the garden…." (*1916* 54).

Some Imagist versions of visual invocation are more complex. Flint begins "Terror" with the organs of sight:

Eyes are tired;

the lamp burns,

and in its circle of light

papers and books lie… (*1916* 60)

The reference to tired eyes calls up vision, making the fatiguing "circle of light" all the more visible and real to the reader. Later in the poem Flint confirms the primacy of seeing when the speaker looks around for a voice that has terrified him by calling his name as his eyes close in sleep: "I open my eyes, / and look, first left, and then right…/ no one is there" (60). The speaker has dozed off, and in that moment of sightlessness, terror struck; this terror, we may note, strikes as the speaker can hear but not see. The poem is thus not just visually oriented in terms of its optical references; the poem goes further, dramatizing the trauma of not being able to see. Fletcher's "In the Theater" places readers in the crowded darkness, "Directing the irresistible weight of their thoughts to the stage." Suddenly, light breaks in: "A great broad shaft of calcium light / Cleaves, like a stroke of the sword, the darkness" (*1916* 43). The spotlight violently transforms visual expectations into visual experience, and confirms how much we depend on sight to understand our world. Finally, Flint's "Easter" invokes vision by shutting it down momentarily near the end of the poem, as if to confirm that sight powered all the previous description. The speaker describes a walk with a friend through the "gorse thickets," by the road, on the "stone steps," offering details of the walk at all turns; then the two pause: "Between two clipped privet hedges now; / We will close our eyes for life's sake" (*1916* 52). This attention to the eyes, though late in the poem, works retroactively to indicate that the poem's description depends on the speaker's open eyes.

One might even note that Pound's "Metro" calls upon the act of seeing. What, after all, is an "apparition"? One sense is certainly the act of appearing, or, more explicitly, the act of appearing to the sight. "The apparition of these faces in the crowd" means, on a basic level, that

the speaker has seen those faces, those faces have suddenly come into his vision. Indeed, this is how Pound describes his experience that inspired the poem: he "saw suddenly a beautiful face, and then another and another…."

Interestingly, the other sense of the word "apparition" – the spectral, ghostly sense – refers to something that can *only* be seen; after all, one cannot touch a ghost – they only appear before one's eyes. This sense of "apparition" challenges Paivio's correlation between concreteness and imageability: "One group included words like *ghost* and *phantom*, which were rated relatively abstract but high *I*, suggesting that the subjects were responding on the basis of object-character when rating on *c*, and sense experience involving, e.g., pictorial referents when rating on *I*" (79). In other words, the ghostly apparition is disproportionately more imageable than concrete; in a strange way it is more purely visual than a similarly imageable but concrete word. Both senses of the word, then, call upon the visual faculty and privilege sight as a mode of experience.

Perhaps the most visually "instructive" Imagist poem is Pound's "The Return." The poem uses imperatives that do not merely describe the act of seeing but overtly demand that the reader "sees." The first six lines read:

> See, they return; ah, see the tentative
> Movements, and the slow feet,
> The trouble in the pace and the uncertain
> Wavering!
>
> See, they return, one, and by one,
> With fear, as half-awakened. (*1914* 42)

The speaker's address is not certain: he could be talking to a friend or talking to himself, urging himself to "see" the return and therefore remember it better. But readers of the poem cannot quarantine themselves so easily from the poem by limiting the force of this command to the speaker's world; readers will also (at least in part) experience this command personally, as if the speaker directs them to follow his orders. Certainly, most advanced readers may *try* to defer to the separate "world of the poem," but the poetic context cannot completely override the sense that the speaker addresses the reader. The poem begins abruptly, with no setting for the command, and thus the reader is more likely to accept the command literally (i.e., addressed to the reader). The repetition of the command maintains this "personal" relationship, and urges the reader to keep visualizing the return that the speaker describes.

Research on Visual Instruction

Experimental research seems to confirm the notion of prompting. Though mental imagery is notoriously idiosyncratic, varying widely from one test subject to another, researchers have discovered that the experience of mental imagery can be prompted through instructions. In other words, while tests cannot control *what* people visualize, test conditions can strongly determine *whether or not* people visualize at all.

Research by Michel Denis suggests that when subjects are instructed to form images while reading, they may become visualizers. Denis first tested for links between imaging abilities and comprehension. He asked college students to read a 2,200 word story once, and informed them that questions would follow their reading. The study recorded the students' reading times and assessed their comprehension; then, crucially, all participants took the Vividness of Visual Imagery Questionnaire (VVIQ). The VVIQ asks people to visualize certain

scenes, such as a sunset, and then evaluate their vividness on a scale of 1 to 5; this self-assessment determined if subjects were high or low imagers. Denis found that high imagers read the story more slowly and remembered more of it (as judged by comprehension questions) than low imagers.

Significantly, Denis then performed another study based on the first. In this phase Denis instructed all participants to form images during their reading; in fact, he asked the students to form specific images for events within each sentence. Denis predicted that reading times and comprehension scores would remain the same for high imagers, who were already imaging, but that the low imagers would produce longer reading times and comprehension scores. The results confirmed this prediction: the high imagers decreased their reading times very slightly and understood the text as well as before, while both reading times and comprehension scores increased for the low imagers. In fact, total reading times between groups were nearly the same. As Esrock summarizes, "Denis thus found that imagery effects can be guided by instructions…" (121).

To be sure, it is impossible to know for certain that participants, whether high or low imagers, actually experience mental imagery while reading. The instructions to visualize might merely have slowed down the reading process for the low imagers; without prompting imagery, such slowing might have allowed them more time to internalize the verbal meaning of the passage. Their subjective experience simply cannot be grasped. Further, Dennett has suggested that what people say about their imagery should not necessarily be trusted; he contrasts the trusting phenomenological approach with the more skeptical scientific approach: "The subjects have no more special authority about the nature of their own mental images, on this approach, than about the nature of their genes or germs" (179). Scientifically, the mental image exists

through its effects, its functional consequences – not answers on the VVIQ. In this light, Denis's research may reveal that imagery instructions create quantitative differences (increased reading times and comprehension scores), but it cannot *prove* that the low imagers were actually experiencing increased mental imagery as they read the passage. They may have experienced no imagery, even if they thought that they were experiencing images. Surprisingly, the phenomenological approach is the harder one to satisfy here; after all, the imagery instructions created verifiable, functional effects by improving comprehension for the group overall, but the subjective experiences are still out of reach to researchers.

Adding to the confusion, self-assessed vividness measures (like the VVIQ) have been challenged on multiple grounds. For one, it is not clear that high scores on the VVIQ have functional consequences; that is, high VVIQ scores do not always correlate with high scores on an objective performance measure that calls for spatial processing. For example, research has not found any relation between the VVIQ and mental folding or rotation tasks, despite the apparently imagistic aspect of these exercises (McKelvie 52). Yet high VVIQ scores have been correlated with strong performance on a reverse spelling exercise — the challenge of saying a word's letters in reverse order, a challenge probably aided by the ability to see the word spelled out mentally (JMI 20); and high imagers have also produced significantly shorter image latencies for high imagery nouns than low imagers, though VVIQ scores were unrelated to image duration (Coucude and Denis 97). The record is rather speckled here, so the functional consequences following from strong VVIQ ratings are unclear. On another level, the very value of vividness has come under fire recently; some theorists, most notably Akter Ahsen, suggest that vividness may not be the best measure of imagery, because non-vivid images often have strong functional

effects. (The rallying term for this counter-movement is quite clear and obvious, if a touch unwieldy: "unvividness.")

Yet despite the problem of phenomenological unknowability and the challenges to VVIQ ratings, the findings encourage a careful leap from phenomenology to science back to phenomenology – that is, from the subjective VVIQ to the quantitative findings to the assumption of increased mental imagery for the low imagers. The parts interpenetrate: the quantitative findings help give the VVIQ self-assessments teeth; the higher times and scores suggest that the high imagers were actually working through slow, vivid, memory-aiding images, as their self-assessments imply. Bolstering the credibility of this leap, the findings are consistent with Paivio's dual coding theory, which links mental imagery and strong memory. These correlations do not, of course, rule out other readings (e.g., people who claim vivid imagery read slowly and carefully in general, but imagery and slow reading are not related), yet they do imply that the leap between science and phenomenal experience is quite reasonable and perhaps even judicious.

There may be a limit to the value of explicit imagery instructions. That is, an overemphasis on imagery can hinder other modes of literary response, like holistic conceptualization or verbal networking; instructing readers to "see" the poetry more may pull them away from these other modes and undermine their overall response. Encouraging the reader to form images may be productive up to a certain point, but after this point more encouragement or urgency for image formation may only undermine the reader's poetic experience.

Some early research by Olive Wheeler (1923) suggests that imagery instructions can be pushed past the breaking point. Wheeler had fifty college students read poems (Gray's *Ode on a*

Favorite Cat and Shelley's *Ode to the Night*) under two different conditions: natural image-formation and labored image-formation. In the first condition, students read the poetry and then "noted the images that occurred *naturally*" (233); they then re-read the poem and determined whether their "appreciation" for the poem increased, decreased, or remained the same through noting the images. In the second condition, the (same) students "were asked to *make an effort* to obtain relevant images, not merely to note the images that occurred naturally" (235). Again, students assessed any changes in appreciation under this condition.

The results were quite striking, if not too surprising: noting imagery increased appreciation among 42 students (84%), while pursuing imagery increased appreciation for 14% of students, and decreased it for 74%. In other words, making an effort to see images proved likely to reduce the overall experience of the poem. (One must remark here that Wheeler's subjects were college students, and thus not necessarily interested in reading a poem over and over under instruction. The experiment might yield different results with more experienced or enthusiastic readers of poetry.) The readers' responses to the second condition demonstrated that some non-imagistic modes of appreciation were fatally reduced: one wrote, "There seems to be an adversely discontinuous process which affects the appreciation of style"; another wrote, "To attempt to get the images clear interferes with the appreciation of the poem as a dream-like whole"; another lamented the loss of "easy flow" (236). For most of Wheeler's subjects, chasing down all relevant images undermined the poetic experience.

This experiment and its results suggest that while the reader can be productively prompted to see poetic images, that reader can also be over-prompted to visualize. Imagery instructions, especially explicit extra-textual ones, may reach a point of diminishing returns, after which they sabotage the larger poetic experience. Imagery should not be coerced or forced from

the poem; its value inheres in the images that come to the reader or listener's mind "naturally," whether through the listener's creative associations, the reader's subjective shift, or the poem's gentle guidance.

The Subjective Shift

So: despite their potential infringements upon literary "appreciation," imagery instructions produce quantitative effects and most likely increase mental imagery as well (especially for readers who claim to visualize poorly). Certainly, there is a difference between explicit imagery instructions and what I have termed "visual prompting" in Imagist poems. Perhaps only "The Return" actively demands that the reader "see" something; all the other textual examples are suggestive, dependent on an imitative function within the reader. That is, the reader will have to join in with the speaker's experience – the experiences of the poem's "I" – in order to visualize; the reader of "Priapus," for example, will have to "see" the pear falling along with the speaker.

Yet this joining in with the speaker may not require so much effort, or be so improbable. In fact, this imitative function often happens almost unconsciously, automatically when readers encounter a strong textual presence. Sven Birkerts argues that reading causes a "change of state": the reader adopts the worldview of the speaker, surrendering personal thoughts and outside awareness to the world implied by the text (247). Birkerts claims that readers enter the textual world almost immediately; using the first paragraph of *Humboldt's Gift* as an example, he writes, "My attention is significantly, then almost entirely, captured by the voice and what it is telling me…My thought becomes Citrine's, my rhythms and instincts his – I change" (245).

Christopher Collins substantially agrees with Birkerts on the "change of state," but argues that the reader always keeps a hold of reality while venturing into imaginative domains. To be fair, Birkerts hints at the fundamental incompleteness of the change of consciousness; he notes that his attention is (only) "almost entirely" captured by Citrine's persona. Yet Collins makes the incompleteness of the transfer explicit: "Poetic play…obliges the reader to assume the voice and referential contexts of others while never relinquishing a sense of the habitual self, the real 'me'. This is the willing suspension of disbelief ('for the moment', as Coleridge wisely added) in the power of the self to become other selves" (67). Collins insists that the change of consciousness and context is voluntary – a *willing* suspension of disbelief; poetic play, with all its context manipulations and obligations, depends on the reader's *choice* to participate; the reader constantly knows, deep down, that the real world still throbs underneath the alluring veil of the play world. Despite such emphasis on the reader's fundamental control of the imaginative process, Collins holds, like Birkerts, that the reader does experience other worlds through the fictive leap of consciousness.

This imaginative leap – the subjective shift – operates in concert with Scarry's notion of narrative prompting, or erased imperatives. If for Scarry the author constantly instructs the reader with cues, for Birkerts and Collins the reader intuitively (and powerfully) internalizes these cues towards a new perspective, a subjective shift. Scarry and Birkerts (and Collins) substantially agree, but they focus on different aspects of the textual experience – the author's instructions and the reader's following of them.

This transfer of subjectivity may be less dramatic in poetry, especially non-narrative poetry, but poetic speakers nonetheless present distinct "voices" that capture readers. The reader takes on the worldview of the poem, or, to put it differently, enters its atmosphere, moves within

its gravity. In this receptive frame of mind the reader is more likely to imagine the poetic world as the speaker presents it; if the speaker "sees" something, the captured reader will "see" it, too, whether automatically or through attentive imitation. For instance, when the speaker of Edna St. Vincent Millay's "The Buck in Snow" says –

> White sky, over the hemlocks bowed with snow,
>
> Saw you not at the beginning of evening the antlered buck and his doe
>
> Standing in the apple orchard? I saw them. I saw them suddenly go,
>
> Tails up, with long leaps lovely and slow,
>
> Over the stone-wall into the wood of hemlocks bowed with snow. (228)

– the reader who submits, nearly automatically, to the speaker's worldview will image the deer, standing in the orchard and then running into the woods, as the speaker has seen them. Even when a poem does not present an obvious speaker, as in Stevens's "The Snow Man," the poem can still prompt a reader to see:

> One must have a mind of winter
>
> To regard the frost and the boughs
>
> Of the pine trees crusted with snow;
>
> And have been cold a long time
>
> To behold the junipers shagged with ice,
>
> The spruces rough in the distant glitter… (9-10)

Here the cues to "regard" and "behold" invite the reader to do as much by imaging the objects that follow. Though there is no stated "I" for the reader to fall in with and mirror, the poem itself exerts a narrative force; the poem's spare, enigmatic comment on the requirements for seeing a

wintry scene is lure enough. The reader, whether following the actions of the poetic persona or the statements of the poem, will do as told (within reason), either by the speaker or the poem itself; when the speaker sees or the poem mentions seeing something, the reader "sees" as well.

The poetic world frames the reader's world, so for the case of Imagist poetry, whose speakers so often (and variously) refer to the act of seeing, the reader is encouraged to occupy a similarly visual world. The reader's subjective shift raises the merely "suggestive" mode of visual prompting – the speaker's stated visual experiences – to the level of de facto instruction. Following Denis's research, this pseudo-instruction tends to (caveats aside) promote visualization, especially for those readers who claim not to image much in the first place. Insofar as Imagist poetry "captures" readers, its emphasis on sight encourages even the most resistant imagers to mentally see what they read.

Free Verse

The final Imagist feature to be considered for its pro-visualization effects is free verse. The connections between imagery and form are very rich and complicated, so of all the investigations into the relations between poetic text and effect, the study of free verse will probably be the most speculative. Nonetheless, I will try to ensure that it is thoughtful, cautious speculation, in the hopes of sketching out some sort of relation between free verse and mental imagery.

Though the relation between free verse and imagery is least assured of all textual features examined in this study, its consequences for mental imagery are not correspondingly huge and exciting. My claim in this chapter is one of cognitive distraction: when readers or listeners attend to patterns of poetic sound, they necessarily attend less to the poem's possible meanings and images; attention is limited, so attention to the phonological level will reduce attention to other levels of the poetic experience. Thus, poetry that is more regular in terms of sound patterns will likely "distract" the reader (away from meaning and image) more than poetry that is less regular, including free verse poetry. As such, this claim, while admittedly polemical and difficult to prove, is not as active or generative for mental imagery as the claims of previous chapters. Rather, this claim about free verse suggests that free verse does not work *against* the reader's experience of mental imagery as more regularly patterned poems might; free verse instead offers the reader or listener a greater chance to experience whatever visual images might be called to mind. In effect, free verse allows the images solicited by the other textual features the best chance to be seen, rather than actively promoting visualization itself.

Loosening Conventions

The exact definition of "free verse" is by no means clear. For this discussion I will use the notion of recognizable unconventionality put forth by H. T. Kirby-Smith and G.S. Fraser. Kirby Smith writes, "Free verse, to succeed as poetry, *must depart in a distinctive and recognizable way from one or more conventions that have in the past governed the organization of the poetic line, or the stanza taken as a whole*" (11, emphasis in original). Free verse moves away from "line-determined (or stanza-based) metrical convention but presupposes that convention as a possibility" (12). It is a departure from, not a voiding of, the poetic conventions that determine the line and meter of free verse. Free verse does not stand alone or manifest an "anything goes" looseness, but rather pushes against poetic conventions that have come to seem limiting; as Kirby-Smith puts it, free verse rises up against conventions that are "perceived by poets more as constraints than as opportunities" (20). According to this rendering, versions of free verse have appeared in English in cycles dating from the late 16th century to the present(17).

Because in this definition free verse responds to poetic constraints, challenging them, the overthrown conventions are generally still latent or implicit in free verse; Fraser declares, "What I recognize as good free verse is verse which does not scan regularly but seems always on the verge of scanning regularly" (74). Such a liminal or spectral quality informs even Eliot's notion of free verse: "the ghost of some simple metre should lurk behind the arras in even the 'freest' verse; to advance menacingly as we doze, and withdraw as we rouse" (34-35). The notion of a ghost suggests that meter haunts free verse; the meter is spectral and not fully present but it still presides over the poetry, or rather behind it. Elements of meter will not disqualify poetry from free verse status, but instead take their place as significant features within free verse, helping to

define the poem's particular relation to convention. (We must note here that in Eliot's formulation meter rouses one from slumber — a view that opposes the argument of this chapter.)

The notion that free verse is a witting and recognizable departure from poetic convention, and that meter lurks ghost-like behind much free verse, emphasizes the important point that most free verse *loosens* convention rather than breaking it. This rendering helps one approach literary history as a rich continuum, and also spares one the frustrating (and perhaps fruitless) quest for a necessary and sufficient formal definition of free verse. Of course, the notion of a departure, or loosening, creates some new grey areas (e.g., how much of a departure is necessary to qualify as free verse?), but overall it helpfully frames free verse as an organic, historically-situated mode of poetry.

In their poetics the Imagists lobbied from the start for free verse that would disrupt the entrenched Victorian metrical system. In the March 1913 issue of *Poetry* both Pound and Flint urged poets to free themselves from the strictures of conventional prosody. In "A Few Don'ts," Pound wrote, "Don't chop your stuff into separate *iambs*" (204); Flint's third rule, from his 1913 "interview" with an Imagist (almost certainly Pound), noted: "As regarding rhythm: to compose in sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of the metronome" (199). According to Imagist poetic theory, conventional prosody would only generate the conventional poetic atmosphere: "old rhythms…merely echo old moods" (*1915* vi). The Imagists presented the move towards free verse as a liberation from the oppressive formality and regulation of Victorian versification.

These directives were not only negative, working against what the Imagists considered to be stale, genteel metrics, but also productive: the Imagists argued that new forms create new ideas, or that "in poetry a new cadence means a new idea" (*1915* vii). Further, while Imagist

policy stressed the possibility of free verse rather than the necessity of it, in the same breath the Imagists held that free verse is more likely than strict meter to accommodate a poet's individual voice: "We do not insist upon 'free-verse' as the only method of writing poetry. We fight for it as a principle of liberty. We believe that the individuality of a poet may often be better expressed in free-verse than in conventional forms" (*1915* vi-vii).

As must be clear, the Imagists did not discover or invent free verse. The Imagist style draws heavily on the 19th century French *vers libre* form, though, as many critics point out, historical differences between French and English poetry prevent a perfect translation of that form. In short, traditional French poetry pays homage to more intricate rules of syllabification and rhyme than English poetry, and thus French poetry was declared "free" even when it retained most of the rules but loosened only line lengths (Kirby-Smith 44). Picking up on such loosening, the Imagists extended this irregularity of line length to an irregularity of meter as well. In addition to their formal debt to the French *vers libre* form, one must wonder if the Imagists also owe a debt of name as well: the Imagists may have employed the French term *vers libre*, despite its slight incongruity with its English referent, for its exotic ring – much as Pound originally did with "Les Imagistes" and "H.D., Imagiste."

In addition to the French legacy, there are many examples of free verse in English that precede Imagism. Whitman wrote in free verse, and he was so aware of his unconventionality that he located his poetry outside the established tradition; he called his compositions songs, carols, and chants, in addition to poems (Sutton 11). Going back even farther, Blake's prophecies and James MacPherson's fragments on Ossian both overturn conventional versification. Even the King James Bible of 1611 contains well-balanced free verse poetry,

especially in its Psalms. Amy Lowell, in her preface to *Some Imagist Poets 1916*, emphasizes (other) historical precedents in order to counter the charge of arrogance:

> The *vers libristes* are often accused of declaring that they have discovered a new thing. Where such an idea started, it is impossible to say, certainly none of the better *vers libristes* was ever guilty of so ridiculous a statement. The name *vers libre* is new, the thing, most emphatically, is not. Not new in English poetry, at any rate. You will find something very much like it in Dryden's *Threnodia Augustalis*; a great deal of Milton's *Samson Agonistes* is written in it… (*1916* xi)

Lowell continues on, through Matthew Arnold and Henley, all the way back to what she declares the oldest reference to *vers libre*, in Chaucer's *House of Fame*. Regardless of the accuracy of this final claim, it shows Lowell very attuned to the historical legacy of free verse in English.

Imagist Variations

Yet while the Imagists did not invent free verse, they actively promoted it as a revolutionary force and produced it almost exclusively. Other than D.H. Lawrence, whose poems often have rhyme and strong metrical patterns, the Imagist poets consistently avoided rhyme and challenged conventional versification, even if obliquely. Instead of following formal patterns, most poets broke their lines "organically," where the syntax suggests a gap; Aldington's "Reflections" demonstrates such an organic mode:

> Steal out with me
> Over the moss and the daffodils.

Come to the temple,

Hung with sprays from untrimmed hedges. (*1916* 12)

These lines do not abandon patterns in language, if that were even possible; Kirby-Smith calls this type of free verse "phrase-reinforcing," because the line marks the syntactic phrase. (The opposite type is "phrase-breaking," which includes stark enjambments. Much of Williams's poetry is phrase-breaking.) In "Reflections" we can easily see that the poem establishes a visual pattern through line length. But in terms of versification, the poem fits no regulated template.

For a more complex example, consider Pound's "In a Station of the Metro" once again. A traditional metrical analysis reveals that the first line falls into six iambic feet; while the syllables in each stress position are not always strong stresses, they generally produce a stronger stress than the syllables in the weak positions. The second line is less regular, beginning with a catalectic opening and then moving through iambs to a final spondee. The feet are easier to see when divided up clearly:

The app / a ri / tion of / these fa / ces in / the crowd;

( ) Pet / als on / a wet, / black bough.

Clearly, "Metro" troubles one of our aspects of free verse quite a bit. That is, unlike Fraser's test for free verse, the poem is not "on the verge of scanning regularly" but rather submits to scanning quite readily, especially in the first line. The iambic feet are subtle but audible. Following Eliot's notion of metrical haunting, there is no ghost here: the meter is substantially present, flesh-and-blood.

But in another aspect – the departure from convention aspect – "Metro" not only conforms to this principle but actually performs it. The first line establishes the poetic convention (iambic feet), and the second line modifies it slightly through a catalectic opening,

the final strong spondee, and the greatly reduced line length. (The first line has twelve syllables, the second only seven.) What is especially fitting, given the "departure" model, is that the line order suggests a chronology: regularity precedes variation in the poem, just as it does in literary history. The poem performs in microcosm a subtle loosening of poetic conventions. We should also note that this loosening of metrical norms is accompanied by the syntactic and thematic shock of parataxis. Just as "petals" announces with its catalectic opening that it does not conform perfectly to iambic meter, "petals" also inaugurates the sudden shift of scene. With "petals" we readers have to adapt our metrical framework slightly (by leaving room for an unwritten unstressed syllable), and we are no longer underground in the metro. This thematic or scenic leap only underscores the variation of meter and line length that suggests, following Kirby-Smith, that the poem should qualify (though perhaps less obviously than other examples) as free verse.

Fletcher's "Arizona" offers more material for our consideration of Kirby-Smith's unconventionality model of free verse. Here are the first two stanzas we have already seen in our discussion of parataxis:

The windmills, like great sunflowers of steel,
Lift themselves proudly over the straggling houses;
And at their feet the deep blue-green alfalfa
Cuts the desert like the stroke of a sword.

Yellow melon flowers
Crawl beneath the withered peach-trees;
A date-palm throws its heavy fronds of steel

Against the scoured metallic sky. (*1916* 35)

The first stanza presents a loose iambic pentameter. The lines contain between ten and twelve syllables (lines two and three have feminine endings), and each line contains five stresses. There are a few notable variations: the conventional pyrrhic/spondee unit in line one, the first foot inversion of line two, the strong spondee ("blue-green") following the accented "deep" in line three, and the catalectic opening of line four primed by line three's feminine ending. The fourth line also suggests an alternate, less iambic reading with the strongly anapestic "like the stroke / of a sword," but these words still submit to an iambic framework. Overall, the first stanza offers a loose iambic pentameter.

The second stanza challenges the loose iambic pentameter form. The first two lines are powerfully trochaic, and their syllable counts are short of pentameter — trimeter and tetrameter, respectively. In the third line, however, the iambic pentameter reasserts itself with a very regular line, and the strong iambic meter continues in the fourth line, though this line is only tetrameter. In effect then, the second stanza stages a departure from the first stanza's iambic pentameter both in meter and in line length, but the stanza returns to iambic pentameter, though with a slightly inconsistent final line length.

Taken together, the first two stanzas of the poem manifest a subtle motion around an iambic pentameter center. As Eliot notes, "The most interesting verse…has been done either by taking a very simple form, like the iambic pentameter, and constantly withdrawing from it, or taking no form at all, and constantly approximating to a very simple one" (33). If Eliot's distinction holds (the second seems perhaps like a pale version of the first), then these two stanzas of "Arizona" clearly illustrate the first trend, the constant withdrawal from (and implicit return to) a regular meter. Fletcher's poem flirts with iambic meter, establishing it then turning

to trochees before coming back to it, and this departure and return reveals it as free (read: convention-challenging) verse. The poem, we must note, also flirts with stanzaic form: though most of the poem's seven stanzas, including the first two, are four lines long, the third stanza is fine lines long, and the fourth three. This looseness (around a general four-line frame) only confirms the poem as free on a higher level as well.

Melopoeia: Musical Elements in Poetry

Because free verse poems challenge strict meter and line determinations, they present fewer linguistic patterns to the reader overall. Certainly, many Imagist poems outside those of the committed versifier, Lawrence, momentarily fall into (or establish) metrical patterns, but these patterns are usually disrupted quickly, and the reader thus cannot expect them. On a very crude level, then, free verse reads and sounds more like "normal" language than heavily stressed, rhymed poetry. As Jakobson puts it, "Free verse is an attenuated form of verse, a compromise between poetic and ordinary language" (216). Certainly, there are many problems with such a statement, principally that it declares an essential difference between poetic and non-poetic language; as Eagleton notes, poetry is largely whatever language we *treat* as poetry. Yet at the same time, Jakobson's notion of compromise does speak to phonological differences between metered poetry and free verse; it is hard to deny that a Petrarchan sonnet sounds different from the greater rhythmic irregularity of free verse. The idea of *melopoeia* (the "musical property" of poetry) categorizes some types or moments of poetry that are particularly music-like; the very category implies a crucial difference of sound.

We should pause and consider the basic premise of *melopoeia*; the notion that poetry can be musical or music-like deserves close attention. Just how can poetry, words spoken by the

voice, be like music? The differences are huge. After all, music organizes all varieties of pitches and rhythms, while poetry organizes speech sounds with pre-set rhythms and minimal pitch relations. As Seymour Chatman points out, this difference makes for greater openness for poetic sounds:

> In speech the *patterns* of tones are conventionally fixed, but the tones themselves are not. In English, for example, the first tone in Accent A, as in
>
> are
>
> How
>
> you?
>
> may occur on any pitch and the second on any pitch higher than it. Not only is the exactness of the pitch irrelevant, but so is the size of the interval. In music, on the other hand, the tones are rigidly prescribed by convention… but the patterns are completely unfixed. (189)

Certainly, Chatman's structure – giving speech tone patterns without fixed tones, and music tones without fixed patterns – is a little too neat: speech patterns are surely more flexible than Chatman makes out, and patterns in music are not totally ungoverned by principles of composition. Yet despite this overzealous partitioning, Chatman's argument does demonstrate a crucial distinction for the poetry-music connection: poetry cannot prescribe pitches in any systematic way. Clearly, as in the "How are you?" example, certain words and phrases will tend towards a conventional pitch contour, but those words cannot produce reliable pitch intervals as music does.

But if the differences between music and poetry are significant and problematic, critics have not always acknowledged such a wide gap. Indeed, many critics seem to define poetic musicality through sheer pleasure — the pleasure of beautiful sounds, the pleasure of sounds recurring in time. A definition of musicality through beauty is generally quite thin; as Chatman notes, "This position is especially characteristic of mechanistic, hedonistic esthetics. The hedonist speaks of the gratifications of 'easy flow', of the intrinsic pleasures of rhythm, alternating between tension and relaxation" (184). In addition to pleasure, those who readily connect poetry and music often make use of the broad concept of "expressiveness" to bridge the conceptual gaps between text and composition: music is "expressive" because it does not denote meanings, and the sounds of language thus take on this vague feature as well. More than anything, though, beauty provides the easiest, most intuitive way to define certain poetry as musical.

Yet this "hedonistic" rubric, this insistence on beauty and pleasure in determining the musicality of language, fatally ignores key aspects of music. As Northrop Frye notes, to consider "euphonious" as an adequate synonym for "musical" is to pave over the necessary and propulsive discord of music's harmonic structures; Frye offers an explanation of this slippage:

> Such phrases as 'smooth musical flow' or 'harsh unmusical diction' belong to the sentimental use of the word musical, and are perhaps derived from the fact that the word 'harmony' in ordinary English, apart from music, means a stable and permanent relationship. In this figurative sense of the word harmony, music is not a sequence of harmonies at all, but a sequence of discords ending in harmony…It is more likely to be the harsh, rugged, dissonant poem (assuming of course some technical competence in the poet) that will show in poetry the

tension and the driving accented impetus of music. (256)

While Frye's speculation about lexical transfer may or not be correct, his larger point – that music is not a stable, flat relation of merely beautiful sounds – bears real attention. Indeed, the notion that poetic harshness or dissonance is *more* musical than sweet mellifluous phrasing challenges the broad, intuitive code of pleasure, the "hedonistic esthetics." Frye's corrective indicates that one must examine the structures of music and poetry closely (not intuitively) in order to generate worthwhile assessments of the relation between the two disciplines.

Derek Attridge, in his comprehensive and incisive book *The Rhythms of English Poetry*, spends some pages investigating the analogy between music and poetry. Attridge terms this analogy the "temporal approach" to prosody, as distinct from the classical (i.e., foot based) and generative (i.e., formal linguistic) models; he notes that this approach extends back to Sidney and Thomas Campion. Attridge notes that in the temporal approach musical notes represent verse syllables according to their perceived durations, and most musical theorists divide the poetic line into measures, with the bar-lines before each main stress. Each measure marks a temporally equal unit.

Attridge suggests, however, that despite the promise of the analogy between musical and prosodic structures, the temporal approach misrepresents the actual production of English speech patterns. The structure of musical notation is too strict to accommodate the rhythms of spoken syllables: "The syllables of English speech cannot be measured and marshaled like the notes of music, and there is no reason why they should fall into elementary time schemes…Musical notation may be a useful way of highlighting the importance of time in the rhythms of speech and verse, but for all its complexity it imposes too rigid an analysis of temporal relations on the infinitely varied movement of language" (25). In other words, the temporal approach may be

instructive as a broad idea, but it cannot possibly capture the nuances of speech patterns. Thus the temporal approach always threatens to straitjacket and overdetermine the lines of poetry it claims to represent. Attridge's analysis thus serves as a warning against a too-literal application of musical structures to the rhythms of poetry.

The topic of poetic rhythm has been subject to some interdisciplinary research in recent years. Many scholars of music have examined this connection and discovered rewarding and deep connections. For one, Fred Lerdahl, in his aptly titled article, "The Sounds of Poetry Viewed as Music," posits a strong analogy between the phonological structures of music and poetry. Lerdahl suggests that patterns of stress (such as grouping, meter, duration, and contour) inform both the musical and the poetic systems. Lerdahl focuses on shared structures between the two separate spheres, and thus avoids the pitfall of notational *application* that Attridge warns against.

Lerdahl distances himself from previous analysts of the music-poetry connection who attempted to forge links through syntax, semantics, or pitch, and argues instead that phonological stress is the determinant factor linking the two domains. He compares linguistic stress and the "phenomenal accent" in music; in both domains, stress is contextual: "The perception, whether of a syllable or pitch event, is one of relative sonic prominence within its immediate context" (339). Lerdahl establishes a "stress grid" (a variation of the "metrical grid" used by linguists) and charts the lexical stresses from smaller to larger units: words, phonological phrases (word groups), and intonational phrases (a vague larger structure, often shorter than the sentence, that "conveys the melody of speech"). For instance, given the lines that Lerdahl analyzes, "Nature's first green is gold, / Her hardest hue to hold," the first syllable of "nature" is stressed (word-level), "green" is stressed within "first green" and "hue" within "Her hardest hue," among others,

(phonological phrase level), and "gold" and "hold" are stressed within each line (intonational phrase level). This multi-level analysis of stress helps reveal the relative prominence of syllables within the poem; the more levels in which a syllable receives stress, the stronger overall that syllable is.

This account of stress undergirds Lerdahl's analysis of poetic meter. He writes, "In both music and poetry, metrical structure consists of hierarchically related periodicities inferred from the signal" (339). In other words, the regular recurrence of stress (periodicity) works within a coherent hierarchy of stress patterns: beats (or syllables) stressed at a high level should also be stressed on lower levels. In both domains, the listener infers a regularity of pattern, both in terms of basic beat/stress and multi-level coherence. Crucially, Lerdahl anticipates the counterargument that variations in language production fatally compromise its metrical structure (and the larger poetry-music analogy):

> It might be objected that periodicities in language, unlike those in the musical case, do not really exist because syllabic and phrasal durations are so variable. Yet, it would be misleading to say that musical durations are invariable. Expressive musical performance depends on deviations from isochrony. Like meter itself, temporal precision is a mental construct. While it is true that durations in verse are usually more variable than those in music, many poetic idioms, from nursery rhymes to sophisticated traditions, demonstrate considerable regularity. As in music, these verbal idioms approach periodicity as a framework against which expressive deviations take place. (339-340)

In other words, despite the greater flexibility of timing within prosodic structures, both musical and poetic stress patterns manifest periodicity as a critical framework rather than a perfectly fixed measure. In this capacity the analogy between the phonological patterns of prosody and of music stands up to the charge that language is simply too diffuse and malleable to manifest true (i.e., musical) rhythm. In terms of meter, the correspondence between poetry and music is strong; in fact, Lerdahl holds that "once periodicity is understood as a relative matter, poetic and musical matter may appropriately be regarded as formally and cognitively equivalent" (340).

Yet the strength of this analogy is limited to a particular mode of poetry – a particularly "musical" (and historically dominant) mode employing meter and rhyme. It is no accident that Lerdahl's account, though presented ecumenically as "The Sounds of Poetry…," uses a strictly metered Robert Frost poem as its case study. Lerdahl's stress grid, which divided "Nothing Gold Can Stay" into such neat stress patterns and multi-level correspondence, surely would not find such a compliant subject in a free verse poem. Indeed, it is crucial that Lerdahl bases his account on regularity of stress, because this basis declares meter the determiner of musicality. By Lerdahl's measure, musical language, or *melopoeia*, does not connote some wispy, evocative idea of rich figuration or even assonance and consonance; rather, it denotes poetry with strong, regular meter.

Pound asserts that music is a necessary – even essential – element of poetry. The poet who ignores music will not get very far: "Poets who are not interested in music are, or become, bad poets…Poets who will not study music are defective." Pound goes on to suggest that a general disregard for music has compromised free verse and its criticism: "It is too late to

prevent *vers libre*. But, conceivably, one might improve it, and one might stop at least a little of the idiotic and narrow discussion based on an ignorance of music" (LE 437).

In effect, Pound argues that free verse should have musical elements within it. Such an assertion seems to complicate this chapter's assumption that free verse is less musical than (more strictly) metrical poetry: if music belongs just as much in free verse as in meter then free verse should be just as musical as metered poetry. Yet Pound addresses the poet's musical knowledge and interest rather than the poem's actual musicality; an interest in music does not necessarily produce the rhythmic regularity that Lerdahl isolates as poetic music. Free verse can be musical without being *as* musical as metered poetry — the difference may well be a matter of the degree of regular rhythm. In addition, Pound makes normative claims: he declares how free verse should be (more musical), not how it is. In fact, Pound's assessment of *vers libre*, though critical, only reinforces our assumption here that free verse is all too often less musical than metrical poetry.

Despite this unfortunate dearth of musicality in free verse, Pound demonstrates that the opposite is not equally true. That is, there is no dearth of free verse in music; rather, classical music often uses the very principles of cadence and loose rhythmic flow that define free verse. In his short essay "Vers Libre and Arnold Dolmetsch," published in 1918, Pound spotlights Dolmetsch's book *The Interpretation of the Music of the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries*. Pound notes that many of the passages about musical interpretation in the book "have a direct bearing on poetry, or at least upon versification"; Pound presents several quotations (all from 17th and 18th century primary sources) and offers only minimal commentary(438). The quotations all indicate that classical masters insisted upon fluidity of rhythm rather than consistent regularity. From Mace's 1613 *Musick's Monument*:

> …you must know, That, although in our First Undertakings, we ought to *strive*, for the most Exact Habit of *Time-keeping* that possibly we can attain unto,…yet, when we come to be *Masters*, so that we can *command all manner* of Time, at our own Pleasures; we Then *take Liberty*, (and very often, for Humour, and good Adornment-sake, in certain places) to *Break Time*; sometimes Faster and sometimes Slower, as we perceive the *Nature of the Thing* Requires, which often adds, much *Grace*, and *Luster*, to the Performance. (438)

Rousseau, in 1687, warns the reader, "Mark not the beat too much." And Couperin, in 1717, distinguishes between (material) Time and (spiritual) Cadence and demands a loose interpretation: "Those who will use these set Preludes must play them in an easy manner, WITHOUT BINDING THEMSELVES TO STRICT TIME, unless I should have expressly marked it by the word *mesure*" (439). Pound wraps all this up by warning against the "erroneous impression that all music was vers libre" and noting instead that "vers libre exists in old music" (439-40).

The analogy (or rather, a sheer substitution: verse libre simply exists within the musical realm) serves Pound well because it establishes fluidity and irregularity as a hallmark of even the most serious, ordered, and rhythmical expression – classical music. Vers libre, then, takes its place within a strong tradition of witting deviation or looseness for enhanced musical effect. As such, vers libre may be less rhythmic than metered poetry, but it still deserves a (respected) place within the poetic establishment. To chase the analogy through to its end: just as the "easy manner" or Cadence may be less rhythmic than strict Time but just as (if not more) musical, vers libre is less rhythmic than metered poetry but it can be just as musical. Certainly, the thrust of this analogy opposes Lerdahl's strict finding that clear rhythm defines poetic musicality; the

comparison suggests that music in poetry is much more than a matter of rhythmic regularity. To the old masters, music is cadence and spirit, a variable sense of time correspondent to what "the *Nature of the Thing* Requires."

The fruit of Pound's analogy between free verse and fluid musical interpretation – the notion that loose cadence counts as music – complements his assertion that vers libre needs to be more musical in order to succeed but seems to complicate the issue of distraction. That is, if music is cadence as well as regular rhythm, then free verse can be more musical without reverting to the strictures of meter; free verse can establish loose cadences that create a strong musical impression. What is less clear is just how this looser notion of music affects Pound's reading of *melopoeia* — given that musical poetry lulls and distracts the reader, and music is cadence, does cadence lull more than strict rhythm? Are there degrees of cadence, and if so, does a stronger or a looser cadence distract more?

Before we attempt to plow through these murky questions, we should remember that Pound does not deny the musicality of rhythm, but rather works to establish the musicality of free verse. In other words, Pound begins with the assumption that rhythm is musical, but asserts that a looser rhythm can be just as musical. Fundamentally, we must remember that cadences do have rhythm, though loose, and this lurking regularity (however creatively modified) is what makes them musical: cadence depends on rhythm; cadence grows out of and away from rhythm. Therefore, even if Pound establishes the musicality of cadence and free verse, this musicality depends on an underlying sense of rhythm. Ultimately, even within the cadence rhythm still defines poetic musicality, and thus rhythm remains the ultimate cause of distraction for the cadences of free verse. Rhythm distracts, so for the looser cadences of free verse, their less obvious rhythmic patterns distract the reader less than more strictly metered verse.

Phonological Distraction

Even if we do assert that a key phonological difference separates "musical" poetry and free verse, the effect of this difference is not automatically clear. How do sound and stress affect how the reader understands (and, given our ultimate question, *sees*) the poem? How does meter influence meaning and mental imagery? Perhaps the effect is to focus the reader's attention in different ways.

Pound suggests that the music of poetry pulls the reader away from the sense of the words. In his definition of *melopoeia* in "How to Read," Pound offers only a vague connection between "music" and sense, with little concern for the potential pitfalls of melodic language: "Melopoeia, wherein the words are charged, over and above their plain meaning, with some musical property, which directs the bearing and trend of that meaning" (LE 25). Music "directs" the meaning, but Pound does not comment on the force of this direction; however important the guidance that melody offers "plain meaning" may be, this definition rests in a vague declaration of it.

In extending his analysis of the three types of poetry, however, Pound soon modifies his hazy notion of musical direction. He notes, as we have seen before, that *phanopoeia* (the "casting of images upon the visual imagination") manifests "the greatest drive toward utter precision of word; the art exists almost exclusively by it." Pound then explains the opposite force within *melopoeia*:

> In *melopoeia* we find a contrary current, a force tending often to lull, or to distract a reader from the exact sense of the language. It is poetry on the borders of music and music is perhaps the bridge between consciousness

and the unthinking sentient or even insentient universe. (LE 26)

The musical property of language dulls what might have been sharp exactitude of language. Musical language, through its connections to the "unthinking" or even "insentient universe," seductively lulls readers toward decreased awareness of meaning.

In fact, Pound warns against this possibility very early on. In "A Few Don'ts," Pound cautions would-be Imagists against oppressive rhythmic structures: "Naturally, your rhythmic structures should not destroy the shape of your words, or their natural sound, or their meaning" (204). To Pound, musical language can be quite dangerous: poetic rhythms can sabotage meanings, and music can pull one away from exactitude.

Wanda Wallace (1994) has performed some interesting research into the question of how musical elements affect text comprehension. If anything, Wallace's procedure may be too literally "musical" for our purposes: she tested subjects for recall of song text that was heard as speech or as melody. In other words, in Wallace's experimental condition her text was not "musical" for its metrical elements (though it contains these, too) but rather because it was presented as song, with explicit tones and underlying chord structure. Sung text is at best a caricature of "musical language," and at worst a misleading analogy for it. Yet all the same, the experiment revealed some findings that are apposite to our more strictly poetic sense of *melopoeia*.

In her experiment subjects listened to the song text as melody under three separate conditions: three verses with a repeating melody, one verse only, and three verses with different melodies for each verse. The control group for each phase was the verse(s) presented as speech. Wallace chose her song text carefully to emphasize meter, rhyme, and comprehensibility: "The ballads from *The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore*…were searched for

verses with clear end rhymes, consistent rhythmical patterns, accompanying melodies, no archaic language, and events or actions that were understandable when heard apart from the context of the rest of the ballad" (1473). That is, the song text was musical in Lerdahl's sense even in the control group, when the subjects heard it as speech.

Wallace found that subjects recalled the song text better as melody than as speech when the melody repeated over the three verses. However, when only one verse was presented the speech condition proved superior for recall (1477), and when three different melodies defined each verse, recall was virtually equivalent between melody and speech (1481). On her positive finding, Wallace concludes that "a repeating, simple melody can provide a recall aid above and beyond…the poetic properties of the text such as rhyme" (1481); or, in other words, actual music outperforms basic *melopoeia* for text recall.

Wallace's negative findings are more provocative for our interests. Given the superiority of speech to melody in the one verse condition, Wallace suggests: "Without repetition of the melody, the melody and the information it contains should be more difficult to learn and should be an additional piece of information for the memory system to process, learn, filter out, or all of these" (1478). In other words, melodic information may be a cognitive burden; only when it is learned through repetition does it become a cognitive crutch or mnemonic device. Indeed, Wallace even claims that an unrepeated, unlearned melody "thus cannot facilitate recall and may actually *distract* from recall" (1478, italics mine). The literal "music" of the text, when not assimilated by the listener as a recall cue, may divert attention away from lexical comprehension.

Certainly, Wallace's findings and speculations do not bear exactly on the cognitive, visual consequences of free verse versus "musical" poetry. For one, her experiment tested for recall, but the memory advantage does not clearly relate to mental imagery. In fact, contra

Paivio's dual coding theory for verbal and imagery systems, Wallace cites Samson and Zatorre's (1991) alternate, non-imagistic dual coding theory for text and melody systems: lyrical information can be stored either way, and thus melody (when repeated) facilitates recall. (Indeed, attributing the memory advantage of the repeated melody to Paivio's system would imply that the repeated melody-text is processed through imagery – the very opposite of my claim that "musical" poetry inhibits imagery.) And as previously mentioned, Wallace's work with melody undoubtedly stretches the limits of what "musical" language might imply. Yet all the same, her quiet suggestion that music can "distract" the listener speaks to the sound-sense interaction.

Reuven Tsur, a theorist of poetic effects, offers a more specific reading into what exactly lulls readers. Tsur argues that strong sound patterns distract the reader, however slightly, from the meaning of those sound patterns. He writes, "Poetic language compels us to 'attend back' to the signifier or to ever higher signifiers in a hierarchy of signs. Attention shifts from the extralinguistic referent to the verbal (semantic) signifier, from the semantic unit to the string of phonological signifiers…The phonetic patterning of poetry (rhyme, metre, alliteration) typically directs attention away from the semantic to the phonological component of language" ("Picture Poetry" 797). In effect, because the reader cannot pay attention to all aspects of language simultaneously, the reader's attention to sound decreases attention to sense. It is important to consider that such a redirection of attention is not the same process as lulling or distracting: the lulled reader most likely gives up a certain amount of attention across the board, the redirected reader effectively trades some semantic attention for sound attention. That is, the lulled, entranced reader probably attends *less* to the poem overall, while the redirected reader attends *differently* to the poem.

More specifically, Tsur claims that certain metrical patterns are particularly likely to distract the reader in this way. As a class, he calls these patterns "obtrusive rhythms"; they are usually very regular and "impose themselves on the reader"; they "'exert their will' more vigorously" than iambs. Tsur names the trochaic and ternary (arranged in threes) meters as the most obtrusive forms in many languages. In English, some iambic meters may be obtrusive, he claims, but most often it is the trochaic and ternary meters that capture the reader. Obtrusive rhythms also draw on repetitions at "higher" levels of organization, as in whole-sale repetitions of lines, anaphora, or epistrophe. Overall, Tsur argues that the effect of these meters is semantically disruptive: "The reader feels as if he were entangled by the sounds of these poems, and tends to perceive their meaning relatively dimly" (*Towards* 431).

As an example of "obtrusive rhythm," Tsur offers some examples from Edgar Allan Poe. He provides a stanza from "Annabel Lee":

For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams

Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.

And the stars never rise but I see the bright eyes

Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.

The meter here is alternating anapestic tetrameter and trimeter. The "ternary" meter is very regular, pushing the reader through little spurts of unstressed syllables to the next stress position. In this sense, perhaps, the meter "exerts its will" more than a looser iambic structure, and thus captures the reader's attention. In addition, the second and fourth lines are exactly the same – a repetition at a "higher" syntactical level. On this point Tsur argues that "the repetition of identical (or nearly identical) lines and rhyme words…enhances the regular effect of metrical convergence which, under certain circumstances, may have an incantatory effect and contribute

to an uncanny atmosphere in the poem" (436). In other words, this "pure" repetition only increases the metrical regularity of an already regular form and thus draws even more attention to the sound level of the poem.

This line of thinking receives extended treatment in Edward Snyder's short volume, *Hypnotic Poetry*. Snyder argues that some poems tend to put their listeners (and to a much lesser degree, silent readers) into a trancelike state: "the reading aloud of a spell-weaving poem puts into action various stimuli, both physical and psychical, parallel to those commonly used to induce a light state of hypnosis, a state called 'hypnoidal' by many scientists" (38). The physical stimuli are the regular beats of the poem's metrical pattern, and the psychical stimuli are episodes of verbal suggestion. The "hypnoidal" state, Snyder tells us, is "a state clearly demonstrable as abnormal yet so light that the subject is unaware of his temporary partial hypnosis" (18). In this state the listener succumbs to the ideas put forth by the poet: "by intensifying the listeners' suggestibility they [spell-weaving poems] permit experiences where – for better or worse – the poet holds sway over the listeners' conscious and subconscious minds" (38). The poet has become hypnotist, directing the entranced reader towards various moods and ideas.

These "spell-weaving" poems accomplish this change in the listener through an accumulation of features: "marvelous versification" – a soothing, "unusually perfect pattern of sound" (39); freedom from abrupt shifts or cleverness; vague, soft, shadowy imagery; repetition or refrain; obscurity that fatigues the listener slightly and encourages surrender; and subtle, "suggestive" technique. Most important of the features is the trance-inducing repetition of stress. Significantly, Snyder anticipates Tsur in arguing that phonological repetition redirects attention from meaning to sound: "Hypnotic poems in general give us heavy stresses falling regularly at

half-second intervals, and so ornamented that the rhythmically inclined listener has his attention drawn to the sound rather than the sense" (42).

Tsur approves of Snyder's argument in general, but offers a pointed modification to the notion of hypnotic effects. Tsur distinguishes between "detecting" and "experiencing" emotion; he suggests that some readers may detect the hypnotic charge to the poem without succumbing to it themselves. In this case, the trance-like elements will simply appear as part of the poem itself: "the reader may detect some of these devices, and experience others, in an attenuated way. This experience is sufficiently strong for the reader to get involved, but sufficiently attenuated, such that the emerging experience is displaced, away from the reader, to the poem, as a perceived emotional quality" (433). In other words, if the reader detects rather than experiences the poem's spell-like qualities, those elements do not affect the reader emotionally but rather appear as mere traits of the text. As such Tsur makes a distinction that tempers Snyder's argument slightly (and one that re-articulates the caveat of the visualization enterprise): not all poetic features will be actively experienced by the reader.

In discussing the third feature of hypnotic poetry, imagery, Snyder explicitly opposes it to the type of imagery produced by the Imagist poets: "Another characteristic of these poems…is a certain vagueness of imagery which contrasts strongly with the hard, clear imagery sought by the group of modern poets called 'Imagists'" (42). In fact, though Snyder only names Imagism as an antagonist to spell-weaving poetry in this one respect, Imagist poems lack nearly all the other features Snyder isolates as hypnotic: they are not in regular meter, but in free verse; they often cleverly and abruptly shift through parataxis and image metaphor; they rarely repeat phrases or stanzas; apart from some instances of esoteric vocabulary, they are usually not difficult or obscure (leading to fatigue) but rather understood quickly. In terms of suggestion, Imagist

poems may suggest certain moods and ideas, but perhaps without the same power and efficacy that Snyder ascribes to the spell-weaving poems.

The issue of suggestion is tricky, and deserves a closer look, not just for the comparison to Imagism but also for its relation to what Birkerts calls "changes of state." Hypnoidal suggestion as Snyder describes it involves most generally the evocation of mood; the soothed listener accepts the poet's state: "the listener is lulled by a perfect pattern of sound,…and he falls into whatever mood the poet 'suggests'" (47). Yet suggestion also involves the listener accepting a particular idea, which usually comes at the end of the poem (after the listener has been lulled) and usually with little or no logical support. Snyder offers as an example Browning's "Love Among the Ruins," which ends with the three simple words "Love is best": "and if the reader accepts them as truth he does so because he has been prepared not intellectually but emotionally" (48).

This version of suggestion pushes up against Birkerts's "change of state," the subjective shift the reader makes in experiencing the world as the speaker presents it. In the last chapter the notion of a "change of state" supported the idea of visual prompting: when the speaker "sees" something or implies the visual faculties, the state-changed reader is likely to follow the speaker and mentally "see" the object as well. In other words, the subjective shift can encourage visualization. But here, with Snyder, the subjective shift (through suggestion) is part of a hypnotic mode that decreases attention to meaning and precludes clear imagery. This apparent contradiction is false, however. The spell-weaving poetry exerts its effects through rhythm, and its effects are much greater – while Birkerts's reader is engaged and follows textual cues imaginatively but at the same time critically, the lulled listener has been primed to accept moods and ideas with as little resistance as possible. The poem has mechanically seduced the listener

towards agreement. More pointedly, unlike Birkerts's "change of state," the mode of hypnotic suggestion will not increase imagery because it is powered by reference-dulling sound patterns; suggestion itself does not limit imagery, but lulling meter probably does.

Snyder singles out free verse for wry censure ("the term *free verse*, like charity, covers a multitude of sins" (105)) and even declares the movement dead. Writing in 1930, he may be forgiven some error here. What is important about his treatment of free verse is that he notes the inability of free verse to induce a hypnotic state: "It is evident that free verse can never be strictly hypnotic in its effect on most listeners, for there is never enough regularity of sound pattern to fix the attention primarily on the rhythmic beats and to deaden a condition of mental alertness" (114). Free verse, in other words, keeps its reader or listener mentally acute; free verse does not allow the reader to slip away from the awareness of sense into a sense-reducing trance of sound.

Another example of the power of sound to seduce and distract the reader away from attention to exact meanings comes from a non-poetic source. The Welsh *hwyl*, an incantatory mode of preaching that was already disappearing in the early part of the 20th century, apparently created hypnotic effects similar to Snyder's spell-inducing poems. Olive Wheeler describes this mode of speaking and notes that it "carries" its listeners primarily through sound values rather than meanings:

> The preacher begins the exposition of his text in an ordinary tone; but gradually as he gets worked up, his words fall into a kind of chant, which is graphically described as the '*hwyl*', that is, 'full sail'. At this stage, provided that the rhythmical arrangement of words has been arrived at spontaneously and not by mere artifice, the hearers appear to be incapable of criticism. The rhythm acts on them like a spell. They are carried along

> on the waves of an irresistible tide: they are inspired and uplifted by the experience. Indeed it does not appear to be absolutely necessary that the hearer should understand the language of the preacher in order to experience something of the uplift. It seems rather as if by this method the speaker could communicate his mood to his hearers almost independently of analytic thought processes or even of clear images in their minds. (241)

It is not clear why the rhythm of the words must be spontaneous rather than artificial, but the effects of this rhythm are clear enough: a spell-like uplift, a near tidal persuasive force, a non-analytic mode of inference. Crucially, the listeners do not even need to understand the meaning of the words – "the language of the preacher" – in order to experience this spiritual awakening; they are capturing the "immediate signification" of the phonological and rhythmical aspects of the words. What's more, the last sentence here points exactly toward (without explicitly asserting) the claim of this chapter – that by directing attention away from semantic analysis, powerful, regular rhythms decrease the reader's susceptibility to mental imagery. Since its thrust is rhythmic, the *hwyl* does not encourage readers to form "clear images in their minds."

The metaphor of "full sail" evokes many rich meanings here. Perhaps the relentless rhythms of language drive the ship of spirituality forward, as if the staccato exhalations of the preacher provide the actual wind for the sails. Perhaps the rhythms drive the ship however they want, and the ship moves without clear destination: progress toward a semantic end-point is sacrificed for the thrill of the phonological ride. Maybe it is the very speed of the preacher's cadences that push the sermon along toward some unknown end. Indeed, along with the notion of "uplift" and the preacher becoming "worked up," "full sail" indicates a potency and frenzy

that Snyder's hypnotic poems lack. But the power of sound patterns drives both Snyder's poetry and the sermon toward their extra-semantic meanings.

Certainly, Wheeler's account suffers from many counts of phenomenological non-verifiability. It is impossible to know that the listeners' refusal to criticize the speaker indicates that they have been seduced by sounds alone; more fundamentally, it is very difficult to gauge whether someone else is actually in a trance-like state or if they merely look as if they are. Nonetheless, the logic of this passage remains: linguistic rhythms, patterns divorced from semantic reference, are able to generate meanings all their own. It is this logical pathway that drives the account. Wheeler ascribes tidal, swaying, irresistible powers to the rhythms of language and declares the sounds induce a (spiritual) spell in listeners.

Wordsworth, for his part, suggested very much the same thing, though without such emphasis. Wordsworth argues that metrical regularity tempers passion and thus reduces the power of language to represent reality; yet such dulling makes meter a more capable vehicle than prose for rendering painful subject matter:

> Now the co-presence of something regular…cannot have but great efficacy in tempering and restraining the passion by an inter-texture of ordinary feeling…and hence, though the opinion will at first appear paradoxical, from the tendency of metre to divest language, in a certain degree, of its reality, and thus to throw a sort of half-consciousness of unsubstantial existence over the whole composition, there can be little doubt but that more pathetic situations and sentiments…may be endured in metrical composition, especially in rhyme, than in prose. (796)

For our purposes, what is crucial here appears as a reflexive assumption: meter simply has a "tendency" to pull language away from reality. Wordsworth does not explain the mechanism of this tendency, but rather just works outward from it to a more particular point about the suitability of meter for "pathetic situations"; the core point, meter's cloaking of reality, drives the conclusion but itself remains unexamined. The language here, especially the "sort of half-consciousness of unsubstantial existence" phrase, rings of a clouded, trance-like state (especially if one reads it as a decrease from full consciousness rather than a creeping awareness of the "unsubstantial existence" of things); but again, Wordsworth does not approach this implication directly. Nonetheless, Wordsworth's strong assumption that strong patternings of sound undermine semantic reliability remains clear.

Not everyone shares this assumption, of course. In fact, Wordsworth's contemporary, Coleridge, asserted almost the opposite: that meter excites the mind. In this view, phonological regularity does not undercut linguistic reality but rather increases the reader's attention to language overall: "metre…tends to increase the vivacity and susceptibility both of the general feelings and of the attention. This effect it produces by the continued excitement of surprise" (197). Coleridge goes on to compare meter to wine, in that both produce powerful effects without being very noticeable themselves; he even declares metered poetry a "medicated atmosphere" (197). Despite the limitations of Coleridge's pharmacological comparisons (as a depressant, wine should imply that meter dulls the senses), he claims that meter is a mental stimulant: it serves to increase vivacity, attention, and surprise. This notion of stimulation opposes Wordsworth's ideas of "half-consciousness" and divestiture (and anticipates Eliot's claim that meter "rouses" the dozing listener), and suggests that meter will only improve the

reader's understanding of the text. To Coleridge, meter provides little jolts that shock the listener into greater awareness.

We must digress for a moment and acknowledge another significant point here. Wordsworth and Coleridge, writing metrically innovative poetry at the same time within the same elite circle, theorized the effects of meter in entirely different ways. This disjuncture reminds us that questions of meter's relation to meaning do not generate stable answers among critics – the relations seem almost entirely open and fully susceptible to critical controversy. It is very difficult to pinpoint how phonological patterns affect semantic uptake (and further, mental imagery), and thinkers have answered these questions in wide-ranging ways.

I. A. Richards, in his *Principles of Literary Criticism*, responds explicitly to Coleridge's assertion that meter excites the mind. Richards in fact seems to channel Snyder as he claims that meter produces increased emotional suggestibility not through stimulation or surprise, as Coleridge thought, but through lulling; Richards seems to approach a physiological reading as he asserts that meter increases suggestibility

> not as Coleridge suggests, through the surprise element in metrical effects, but through the absence of surprise, through the lulling effects more than the awakening. Many of the most characteristic symptoms of incipient hypnosis are present in a slight degree. Among these susceptibility and vivacity of emotion, suggestibility, limitations of the field of attention, marked differences in the incidence of belief-feelings closely analogous to those which alcohol and nitrous oxide can induce, and some degree of hyperaesthesia (increased power of discriminating sensations) may be noted. We need not boggle at the word 'hypnosis'…There is a change in the regime of

consciousness, which is directly due to the meter…(143-144)

Richards turns to alcohol and nitrous oxide to explain the lulling effect of meter, perhaps explicitly rewriting Coleridge's medically inapt reading of wine as a stimulant. Richards claims an increase in "sensations" (through the improved sensory discrimination of hyperaesthesia), but this should not be confused with an increase in (semantic) sense; the increased sensations are presumably subtle physical feelings or inchoate mental moods rather than specific meanings. In fact, the "limitations of the field of attention" may speak to Tsur's later notion of awareness directed away from the semantic field. Perhaps Richards's Snyderian reading is most important given his position – that such an established critic as Richards posits the hypnoidal reading, and even defends it from skeptics who might "boggle" at this interpretation, makes the analogy to hypnosis slightly less renegade and perhaps more worthy of critical attention.

Phonological Distraction and Mental Imagery

More important than Richards on these matters, however, is Hulme. In his "Lecture on Modern Poetry," delivered first in 1908 or 1909 and revised for a 1914 reading, Hulme lays out his position on the old metrical poetry and "the new visual art." He claims that they are two distinct arts: the first is meant to be chanted, and the second "to be read in the study." This second, new art is visually-oriented and thus does not demand the aural presence of meter: "I quite admit that poetry intended to be recited must be written in regular metre, but I contend that this method of recording impressions by visual images in distinct lines does not require the old metric system" (FS 73). In other words, meter and visual images anchor two separate systems of poetry.

Hulme extends this separation into mutual antagonism. That is, the old metrical systems and the new visual system are not just distinct modes or systems, but their techniques actually work at cross-purposes: meter lulls the mind, and images arrest it. He writes:

> The effect of rhythm, like that of music, is to produce a kind of hypnotic state, during which suggestions of grief or ecstasy are easily and powerfully effective, just as when we are drunk all jokes seem funny. This is for the art of chanting, but the procedure of the new visual art is just the contrary. It depends for its effect not on a kind of half sleep produced, but on arresting the attention, so much so that the succession of visual images should exhaust one. (73)

Hulme begins with the (by now familiar) hypnoidal argument, but moves on to claim that visual images suffer in the musical environment. Indeed, images and meter create opposite effects, and thus images would compromise musical poetry (by stimulating and "arresting" the mind, rousing it from its suggestible state) just as much as meter would compromise the new visual poetry (by lulling the brain when it needs to be alert and attentive). It is interesting to note that the ultimate effect of both modes of poetry seems to be fatigue, but of a different sort: the chanted poetry produces a hypnotic stupor during the reading, but the visual poetry tires the mind through continuous attention-grabbing that the reader succumbs to exhaustion when it is over. Most importantly, though, Hulme asserts not only that meter lulls the mind into a hypnotic state, but also that this hypnotic state opposes the state of mental imagery. Simply stated, by Hulme's logic musical lulling inhibits image formation.

C. W. Valentine, a psychologist, suggested in 1923 that sound and visual image may be at odds with each other, and that sound may "displace" mental imagery. He wrote, "A law of

compensation or rivalry is suggested. Visual imagery is reported to displace or be displaced by auditory imagery, or by emphasized attention to rhythm, sound, or meaning" (190). According to this law, not only will attention to rhythm inhibit visual imagery, the reverse will be true as well: strong images will undercut attention to the poem's sounds and meanings. Rhythm and imagery seem to be mutually inhibitory. However, Valentine emphasizes a comment by one subject who keeps poetic rhythms (and not imagery, as the "law" would imply) as his cause: "I find that if rhythm enters in with musical words I pay attention to them, and do not visualize at all, but when there is no musical rhythm, visual imagery of scenes familiar to me associated with the words is very pronounced" (181). In this formulation, visual imagery does not inhibit attention to the rhythm, but the lack of rhythm allows for strong imagery. Though Valentine's experimental methods (introspection, self-reporting) are quite loose, his findings are suggestive, and one must regret the dearth of contemporary data on the interrelation of rhythm and imagery.

Elaine Scarry offers some further clues into the sound-imagery relationship in *Dreaming by the Book*; Scarry suggests, in a roundabout way, that the acoustic (as well as visual) materiality of a poem undercuts its power to direct the reader's imagination. This insight corresponds to the larger premise that sound distracts from sense, but it stands against the more particular premise (claimed by Snyder and Wheeler) that hypnotic poetic effects increase suggestibility in the reader. Scarry's notion of the sound-sense trade-off implies that the sound-seduced reader of metrical poetry will in fact respond *less* to textual content cues than the reader of prose.

Scarry divides artistic effects into three distinct classes: *immediate sensory content*, such as a portrait you see or a musical performance you hear; *delayed sensory content*, as in a musical

score, which contains instructions for producing sensory content; and *mimetic content*, the things readers and listeners imagine seeing, touching, and hearing (but of course do not see, tough, or hear).(6) Scarry notes that every art form leads us to experience each aspect of content, but that certain art forms are weighted toward some of the classes. Music and the plastic arts appeal primarily to immediate content, while the verbal arts principally engage with mimetic content.

However, Scarry distinguishes between the experiences of poetry and prose, and her distinction speaks to the phonological claims made here. More than prose, Scarry claims, poetry attends to the first two modes of artistic content: its stanzas and line breaks are immediately visible and provide an "at once apprehensible visual rhythm"; and given that poetry is often heard, the words on the page instruct the reader towards an aural experience. Scarry contends that "the page does not itself sing but exists forever on the verge of song" (7). She compares a (rhymed and metered) stanza from Wordsworth's "Gold and Silver Fishes in a Vase" to Hardy's *Return of the Native*, and examines them both in light of a Matisse painting; Scarry holds that, unlike the painting, both the poem and the prose produce mimetic content, but that Wordsworth's poem is more materially present than Hardy's prose:

> Because of the sound of the poem, the palpable touch of the interior parts of the mouth glancing across one another even in silent reading, and because of the visual scanning of the lines, the material surface of the poem is closer to the material surface of Matisse's painting than is Hardy's prose…[Wordsworth] is a little closer to Matisse than Hardy is. (8)

The phonological and visual effects of Wordsworth's stanza move the poem (however slightly) towards the immediacy of Matisse's painting.

Though Scarry does not explicitly say so, her account implies that the materiality of the poem detracts from its mimetic content. Her account above conceives of the artistic relation of the painting, the poem, and the prose as points on a spectrum; Scarry underscores this linear metaphor when she notes that "the poem is a few inches to the left of the narrative since it has its metrical feet in the material world" (8-9). (Presumably, given their original ordering and the context here, *immediate sensory content* is on the left of the spectrum, *delayed sensory content* is in the middle, and *mimetic content* is at right. However, *delayed sensory content* may be absent, since Scarry opposes materiality and mimesis here.) The entailments of this linear metaphor are suggestive: any motion towards one end is necessarily a motion away from the other end; a point can only occupy one position at a time. In other words, Scarry's implicit account (if not her explicit word) holds that as language takes on greater materiality or immediate content, it simultaneously gives up on mimetic content — what the words prompt us to imagine. The visual and phonological patterns of poetry pull it away from the purer mimetic signification of prose.

This sound-sense relationship may not be not a pure zero-sum game, but rather an interdependent set of variables, a cognitive trade-off. Such a trade-off reveals itself in the game of saying a word over and over again until it ceases to signify normally. Gertrude Stein, perhaps the consummate modern meditator on language, often played this game in her writings: "That makes a sound that gently sings that gently sounds but sounds as sounds It sounds as sounds of course as words but it sounds as sounds. It sounds as sounds that is to say as birds as well as words." Through repetition, the word "sounds" becomes just that, a sheer sound, with less than its standard meaning. By the end, "sounds" takes on a chirpy musical aspect ("as birds") that

threatens to replace or at least supplant conventional reference. Stein's insistence on the rhyme between birds and words suggests that all words have this latent musical bird-sound in them.

This trade-off may have effects for imagery as well: when the sound-seduced listener gives up some amount of attention to meaning and reference, that listener is probably less likely to visualize the scenes described. In Scarry's terms, immediate sensory content undercuts the mimesis of perception. More specifically, patterned sounds compromise semantic interpretation, and visualization depends on the semantic, not phonological, mode of language. Aural attention undercuts reference, and this in turn makes mental imagery less likely.

Other terms may come in handy here. Tsur argues that poetry brings attention back to the signifier, which in ordinary usage serves as a nearly transparent pointer to the signified. That is, poetic language brings attention to language as language, rather than serving just to indicate its referents; the signified's sensory qualities compete with its referential function. Louis Macneice registers this idea somewhat nonchalantly, and certainly without any linguistics terminology, when he writes that "Roughly speaking, the poet wants his *words* to be listened to or looked at more than the prose-writer does" (114). That is, in poetry words are generally more important in their own right than they are in prose, where they usually generate meanings with less attention to their own physical characteristics. Another way of putting this is that poetry often *foregrounds* language, making it an object in its own right rather than an (ostensibly) invisible method of relating objects in the world.

Linguistic foregrounding may undermine the semantic aspect of poetry through the very richness of sounds. These sounds no longer serve just as arbitrary elements within a larger semantic system, but rather create, through pattern and repetition, their own semantic force. As

Jakobson notes, "That spell of the sheer sound of words…[endows] the distinctive features themselves with the power of immediate signification. Their *mediate* way of signification totally disappears…" (231). By "distinctive features" Jakobson means the smallest elements of linguistic sounds, smaller even than phonemes. So, words are at base sound patterns, but these sounds are often passed over on the way to semantic reference; the phonemes lose their phonological impact over time. But patterns of similar sounds can reclaim the phonological impact that the words have lost. In this view, sonorous word-patterns make the phonemes "mean" in their own right.

Despite this insight, Jakobson pushes too far if he claims that referentiality ("their *mediate* way") drops away completely – the semantic level may be attenuated but it surely is not totally obliterated, leaving only an enigmatic soundscape. As an alternative, Jakobson may be claiming something smaller: that the phonemes no longer *merely* (i.e., invisibly) mediate between idea and projected meaning, or between addresser and addressee; given patterns of sound, the phonemes exert their own force while at the same time pointing to their referents. That is, the phonemes generate meaning on multiple levels. Either way, Jakobson's larger point about the "immediate signification" of sound patterns still holds. The larger issue is how much such "immediate signification" distracts or detracts from the referential/denotative signification of words and phrases.

Challenges to the Distraction Model

As noted previously, the relations between sound and sense are not clear. Though we have attended to many examples and theories that posit - explicitly or implicitly - the notion of phonological distraction, this idea is by no means agreed upon. (Indeed, the Wordsworth-

Coleridge disparity proved this.) Yet like the very notion that sound patterns undercut sense, the challenges to this idea have not been very systematic overall. One reason for this, in addition to the endemic murkiness of the topic, is logical: one might simply assert that phonology does not distract from meaning, and leave it at that, but such a null-claim (i.e., a claim for no relation) only attempts to pull the relation toward neutrality. More daunting (and exciting) would be a counterargument that establishes a semantic *increase* for sound patterns where Tsur, Scarry, and Pound claim a *decrease*. Coleridge's declaration of increased vivacity is one such claim.

Perhaps the most reasoned challenge to the idea of phonological distraction comes from the Russian Formalists, who assert a generative (i.e, non-null) counterargument along logical lines. They hold, at base, that metrical organization disrupts linguistic routine and thus sharpens perception. This claim follows their general principle of artistic defamiliarization or disautomatization: the idea that art should make the familiar strange, uproot conventions in order to see reality anew. The rigors of metrical composition estrange language by creating new possibilities and denying old habits; as Erlich paraphrases Franciszek Siedlecki, the Polish formalist: "the tight organization typical of verse tears the sound-stratum of language out of the amorphous inertia which is its lot in ordinary speech" (214). This rendering turns the tables: metrical regularity and order promote linguistic- conceptual irregularity and disorder of a productive sort, and the patterns of meter (which may seem overly stable and inert on a formal level) are able to overthrow the stable, inert patterns of conventional language use. In other words, formal constraint creates linguistic novelty.

In other words, the Russian Formalist stance does not simply boil down to Frost's chestnut about playing tennis without a net, or the implicit value of formal regulation. Indeed, the ultimate value of defamiliarization is epistemological: it provides a fresh, clearer reading of

the world; it forces one to know the world in a new way. As Erlich writes, the constraints of meter create new perceptions:

> By tearing the object out of its habitual context, by bringing together disparate notions, the poet gives a *coup de grace* to the verbal cliché and the stock responses attendant upon it and forces us into heightened awareness of things and their sensory texture. The act of creative deformation restores sharpness to our perceptions, giving 'density' to the world around us. (150)

In other words, meter's challenge to habit brings the reader or listener a new awareness of the world. Meter sharpens the precision of our sense perceptions and fosters new insights into the reality (the "sensory texture") of things. In effect, this argument contradicts the Steinian (or childish) principle of lexical defamiliarization, in which a repeated word loses its meaning as its sound become strange. The Russian Formalists assert that deformation should actually lead to stronger meaning and a more precise awareness of the thing itself, but perhaps their sense of deformation is not as literal as Stein's. At any rate, the notion that meter productively disrupts and sharpens perceptual awareness not only opposes the idea of a cognitive trade-off (the distraction theory), but replaces it with the idea of cognitive improvement.

Another challenge to the distraction theory does not oppose it head on with a generative counterargument but asserts opposing imagistic consequences. That is, the distraction theory implicitly holds that regular sound patterns undermine mental imagery: the reader pays attention to sounds and cannot attend as well to the semantic elements of the words, and thus imagery, which involves a visualization of meanings, falls off as well. The theory seems to assert that meter will reduce mental imagery.

Yet not all thinkers agree with the second aspect of the theory, the claim that decreased attention to semantic elements inhibits mental imagery. Bergson, for one, seems to mingle the notion of distraction with a pro-imagistic reading of meter:

> The poet is he with whom feelings develop into images, and the images themselves into words which translate them while obeying the laws of rhythm. In seeing these images pass before our eyes we in our turn experience the feeling which was, so to speak, their emotional equivalent: but we should never realize these images so strongly without the regular movements of the rhythm by which our soul is lulled into self-forgetfulness, and, as in a dream, thinks and sees with the poet. (*Time* 15)

Images are crucial to this poetics, mediating between the poet's emotional and verbal registers and providing window through which the reader can glimpse the poet's original feeling. It makes sense that Bergson would not want to give them up, even within the lulled state of metrical hypnosis ("self-forgetfulness"). Instead, Bergson claims that rhythmical entrancement only *increases* imagery, or, more precisely, perhaps, it increases the realization of whatever images are apparent or latent. Meter both entrances and makes images more vivid. Bergson therefore believes in distraction and metrically-induced hypnotic states, and like Snyder he asserts that this trance can make the reader more receptive to the poet's worldview. But while Snyder holds that the trance will produce suggestibility on the conceptual level but not for imagery, Bergson claims both: the lulled reader "thinks and sees with the poet."

Bergson's position may be especially important to the discussion given his significance to Hulme and to Imagist poetics at large. Indeed, his rendering of the role of images in the poetic process calls to mind Imagist notions of reciprocity and Eliot's "objective correlative." Bergson

claims that images bridge the poet's original feeling and subsequent textual production, and further, that these images then appear to the reader and enable the reader to experience the poet's emotion. This process is strikingly familiar to what Gage dismisses as the Imagist "fallacy of reciprocity," the notion that poetic objects carry implicit emotional charges, and that the reader will be able to infer these feelings by reading about the object. In other words, the poet lodges emotion in an object, and the reader then unpacks the associations of the object in order to reconstitute the original emotion. Bergson's premise merely uses images rather than objects as the mediating force. Further, Bergson's idea of an "emotional equivalent" anticipates Pound's "formula" and Eliot's "objective correlative," two ways of talking about the mediating object that exerts such force within Imagist poetics.

Despite the similarity of these grander ideas, it seems clear that the Imagists did not agree with Bergson that meter improves the realization of mental imagery, or at least that they did not consider such a function valuable enough to overcome the revolutionary lure of free verse. Given Pound's comments on *melopoeia* (i.e., it distracts "from the exact sense of language"), the first is more likely. Yet such a disagreement only reminds us, crucially, that relations between phonology, semantics, and imagery defy easy and consensual interpretation. The valences of the links between these three components are always open to debate.

Even with an eye toward such opposing viewpoints as Russian Formalist sharpening and Bergson's image-strengthening trance, the issue is certainly still even more complex than we have made out. There are other possibilities we have not yet considered. In some cases phonological patterns might increase attention to the semantic function by encouraging the listener to meditate on the words, mull them over. Meditation on sounds might modulate into meditation on meaning and generation of images. Or perhaps word repetition could increase

imagery because the first instance would "prime" the image and thus speed along subsequent images provoked by the repeated word.

Another complication is that while the sway of sound patterns may direct attention away from semantic processing and visualization, it is fact listening (not reading) that is best for visualization. Research has demonstrated that within a modality (i.e., visual, auditory, olfactory senses) perception and imagery interfere with each other (Kosslyn 1983 76). Reading, or perceiving a text visually, will decrease the reader's ability to mentally image; listening will not compromise imagery in this way. So in fact, the reader should be *more* likely to visualize while listening to a poem's words than while reading them. That is, it is precisely when words exert their strongest phonological patterns (i.e., when heard aloud) that the cognitive mechanisms for imagery are most available. This fact complicates the distraction theory a bit: as Snyder notes, meter will distract more from reference and imagery when the poetry is heard rather than read; yet images are more likely when poetry is heard. These two mechanisms (one admittedly theoretical) work against each other, but the imagery benefit from listening is most likely small compared to the imagery suppressant of meter. Ultimately, intra-modality interference (or more exactly, inter-modality non-interference) tempers the distraction theory, however slightly.

Yet all the same, these considerations do not totally smooth out the conflict between sound and sense when the sounds solicit intense aural concentration. Free verse, by not directing attention away from the semantic function, maintains the referential function of language more than rhymed meter does, and thus keeps visualization of the poetic objects a strong possibility. In the end, this line of argument is largely negative: Imagism's free verse, unlike the "spell-weaving" rhythms of metered and rhymed poetry, at least does not actively reduce the reader's chances to image the poem. Free verse may in fact just allow Imagism's pro-imagery features

(concreteness, parataxis, prompting, image metaphor) to take effect rather than actively adding to them.

Epilogue: Some Consequences

The textual features studied here – concreteness, parataxis, image metaphor, prompting, and free verse – all contribute towards the visual nature of poetry that includes them. Taken singly and collectively, these features promote visualization in the reader, and their prominence in Imagist poetry suggests that Imagist poetry is particularly visual in its effects. While readers certainly differ in their capacities and willingness to mentally image literary scenes, the bundle of pro-imagery features prominent in Imagist poetry heightens their idiosyncratic visual capacities and willingness; a reader is more likely to image when reading Imagist poetry than when reading another type of poetry that lacks these textual encouragements. We can assert, then, from our research-propped vantage point, that much Imagist poetry achieves the visual status that its key theorists set out in their poetic theories. Perhaps as well as any verbal medium can, Imagist poetry solicits and generates mental imagery.

If, following the logic of this project, Imagist poetry does encourage the reader to visualize its descriptions, what are the consequences of this visualization? How does one's experience of mental imagery affect the meaning of the imaged poem? In other words, what does mental imagery *do* to the reader's experience?

Most fundamentally, the reader who images while reading is much more likely to remember the material than the reader who does not image: imagery improves memory. This connection underscores Paivio's influential "dual coding theory," and it has been borne out in many trials. The memory advantage for visually-encoded linguistic stimuli is clearest at the level of the word or phrase, but concrete words may produce imagery within paragraphs, too. As mentioned before, research results here are mixed: though Sadoski found continued concreteness effects within paragraphs, Marschark did not, and he argues that concreteness effects for

sentences within paragraphs depend on distinctive (not relational) information or "unrelated,"[215] "scrambled prose." At any rate, much Imagist poetry is paratactically scrambled rather than hierarchically organized or syntactically subordinated, and thus it fulfills even the more stringent of these two imagery findings. Parataxis allows the higher-level structures of the poem to retain the memory advantage of its concrete language through imagery. Regardless of the exact mechanism of paragraph recall, imagery seems undeniable in its effects: readers who report as high visualizers take longer to read and remember more of the material than those who report as low visualizers.

In addition to its association with improved recall, mental imagery has also been linked to a curious mental event known as hypermnesia. Hypermnesia is a cognitive phenomenon in which one remembers something after previously not being able to recall it; the phenomenon suggests that the information is stored in the brain but is not always accessible. Its causes are still unknown, and experimenters have suggested and tested many ways of producing it: electrical stimulation of the brain, truth serum, free association, cranial impact (Esrock 99). Despite the unknown workings of hypermnesia, researchers have discovered that it corresponds in part to mental imagery. Matthew Erdelyi found that verbal stimuli produce hypermnesic effects when those words have been visually encoded. In other words, when one visualizes what one reads, the visualized material will be stored but may not be immediately accessible – it may sit latent within the brain, and appear to memory later. This finding suggests a strange situation for visualizers of Imagist poetry: they will likely remember more of the poem than non-visualizers, but they may not have unbounded, immediate access to those images. Recollections of the poem may surprisingly (and perhaps frustratingly) arise at a later time, perhaps after one needs the information.

Though visualization may produce a few odd, unaccountable memory experiences at times, its overall improving effect for memory should not be underestimated. The richness of the reading experience pivots on memory and the reader's ability to draw connections within and across texts; the reader who can call on more relevant material from memory will likely produce more fertile readings of the text. Imagery's role in boosting memory thus makes it a significant player in determining the overall quality of one's reading and interpretive experience. Mental images make words, sentences, and paragraphs more memorable, and thus more available for comparison with other verbal stimuli.

As noted earlier in the concreteness chapter, mental imagery will also have consequences for the reader's affective responses. Cocude found that readers who form images of verbal cues rate those words as less intense than readers who do not image the words. This experiment indicates that readers of Imagism who visualize will experience its individual *words* (if they can be separated out of phrases), though not necessarily the overall poetic experience, as less emotionally powerful than non-imaging readers. Other research by Holmes and Matthews suggests just the opposite: that mental imagery will intensify readers' specific affective responses and even heighten their emotional state overall. What's more, their experiment involved scenarios rather than discrete words, a condition that more closely replicates the higher-order poetic experience. Their work indicates that visual images can boost the affective experience, and it corresponds to the complicated larger idea that imagery and affect are linked in the brain.

Yet for all its suggestiveness, the finding by Holmes and Matthews refers specifically to negative emotions. Strictly, Holmes and Mathews indicate that the reader of Imagist poetry who visualizes will become more anxious from its negative content than the reader who processes the poetry verbally. (We do not know if imaging positive or neutral content will likewise increase

affect.) The exact implications are therefore quite limited: "aversive events" are not very common in Imagist poetry, at least not on the order of the buildings on fire and sharks in the water, as in the experiment. While many Imagist poems, especially in the 1917 anthology, refer to troops, rifles, and bombs, they rarely depict a horrible scene explicitly. A strong exception is Lawrence's "Terra Nuova"; some lines from the fifth section read:

> thousands and thousands of gaping, hideous foul dead,
> that are youths and men and me, being burned with oil, and consumed
> in corrupt thick smoke, that rolls
> and taints and blackens the sky, till at last
> it is dark, as dark as night, or death, or hell

These lines are certainly highly emotional and aversive, and imaging them should bear two consequences. According to Cocude, imaging these words will decrease the emotional charge of the verbal stimulus (and possibly the mental referent); according to Holmes and Mathews, imaging this section will increase the reader's anxiety and emotional intensity overall. The words will become less affective, but the reader will be more affected overall. But as noted, "aversive events" are not too common in Imagist poetry, so such a heightened state of anxiety is not likely to happen very often. More often, in line with Cocude's finding alone, the reader may experience the words as less emotionally intense when imaging the content of the poems than when not imaging, but the reader probably will not experience an increase in general anxiety.

Literary visualization, to be sure, can yield important effects for readers at large: increased memory, longer reading times, hypermnesia, decreased verbal affect, increased general affect. What. however, are the effects of *knowing* about the ways in which texts encourage

visualization? In other words, how might the reader of this study – the reader who has imbibed these psychological theories and data, the reader who has considered Imagist poetic theory, the reader who has followed the winding course of the five textual features – be affected by this knowledge of literary visualization? To the question I offer two hopeful responses, one parsimonious and the other grander. The modest response addresses local reader effects; I hope that readers of this study will consider the textual motivations behind their own images, and that readers will pause to reflect on the effects (if any) of the five discussed features on their responses to poems. The grander response to the question addresses the future of literary criticism; I want readers will ponder and - very hopeful now - perhaps even challenge the illogical and foolish banishment of mental imagery from the critical palette.

Fundamentally, this study encourages readers to take their imagery responses more seriously and consider what in the text helps create those responses. I hope that the experience of vibrant imagery will lead readers to turn back to the words themselves for clues rather than chalking the experience up to sheer idiosyncrasy. The reader of Elizabeth Bishop's "The Fish," for example, might "see" the fish quite clearly and look to the poem for answers. Here is the poem in full, followed by a reading of its enticements toward visual imagery:

> I caught a tremendous fish
> and held him beside the boat
> half out of water, with my hook
> fast in a corner of his mouth.
> He didn't fight.
> He hadn't fought at all.
> He hung a grunting weight,
> battered and venerable
> and homely. Here and there
> his brown skin hung like strips
> like ancient wall-paper,
> and its pattern of darker brown
> was like wall-paper:
> shapes like full-blown roses

stained and lost through age.
He was speckled with barnacles,
fine rosettes of lime,
and infested
with tiny white sea-lice,
and underneath two or three
rags of green weed hung down.
While his gills were breathing in
the terrible oxygen
- the frightening gills,
fresh and crisp with blood,
that can cut so badly -
I thought of the coarse white flesh
packed in like feathers,
the big bones and the little bones,
the dramatic reds and blacks
of his shiny entrails,
and the pink swim-bladder
like a big peony.
I looked into his eyes
which were far larger than mine
but shallower, and yellowed,
the irises backed and packed
with tarnished tinfoil
seen through the lenses
of old scratched isinglass.
They shifted a little, but not
to return my stare.
- It was more like the tipping
of an object toward the light.
I admired his sullen face,
the mechanism of his jaw,
and then I saw
that from his lower lip
- if you could call it a lip -
grim, wet and weapon-like,
hung five old pieces of fish-line,
or four and a wire leader
with the swivel still attached,
with all their five big hooks
grown firmly in his mouth.
A green line, frayed at the end
where he broke it, two heavier lines,
and a fine black thread
still crimped from the strain and snap
when it broke and he got away.

> Like medals with their ribbons
> frayed and wavering,
> a five-haired beard of wisdom
> trailing from his aching jaw.
> I stared and stared
> and victory filled up
> the little rented boat,
> from the pool of bilge
> where oil had spread a rainbow
> around the rusted engine
> to the bailer rusted orange,
> the sun-cracked thwarts,
> the oarlocks on their strings,
> the gunnels - until everything
> was rainbow, rainbow, rainbow!
> And I let the fish go. (42-44)

Many readers surely experience vivid mental images while reading this poem. This experience is no accident: the poem makes use of all five pro-imagery features. The poem lavishes concrete details on the reader, especially nouns: barnacles, gills, bones, eyes, fish-line. Bishop takes the reader through a careful inventory of these nouns, examining the fish part by part. Though the adjective "venerable" challenges the reader's visual imagination, it is not until the end that an abstract noun – "victory" – interrupts the stream of concreteness, but this is a rare moment, and one that depends for its meaning on the imageable and concrete features of the fish. The poem does flirt with esoteric concreteness in a few points, most notably "isinglass," but also perhaps "sea-lice" and "peony." Other than these words, however, the lexical concreteness is seemingly foolproof in its imageability.

In terms of parataxis, the poem jumps from one part of the fish's body to another; while each part is technically subsumed within the information network of the fish, each part still maintains its distinctiveness. There is a loose narrative order to the poem, but this order is undermined by abrupt switches (most notably the inserted phrase, marked by a dash, "—It was more like the tipping / of an object toward the light") and floating, non-predicated phrases (such

as "A green line, frayed at the end / where he broke it, two heavier lines, / and a fine black thread / still crimped from the strain and snap / when it broke and he got away"). These more obvious moments of parataxis (both as interruption and as syntactic fragmentation) contribute to the parts-based distinctiveness that maintains imagery effects at the level of the sentence.

The poem has a few image metaphors that encourage a visual mode of interpretation. The speaker thinks of "the coarse white flesh / packed in like feathers," which implies a physical similarity. The feathers, each a model of structure and spatial economy, pack together in an overlapping, notched pattern; fish flesh holds onto the bone with a similar model of imbrication (and further, large fish bones resemble feathers when picked clean). The poem also relates old fish-lines (culminating in hooks set in the fish's mouth) and old ribbons (culminating in medals), which both fray and tatter until finally giving out. Both image metaphors offer physical cues that encourage the reader to see one term and then the other. Admittedly, measured against the earlier examples these image metaphors present less structural correspondence (e.g., medals hang down with gravity, but the hooks are highest on the fish, and the lines hang down), but they still have enough structural resonance to promote visual imaging.

"The Fish" is full of visual prompts of all kinds. Most obviously, the speaker documents many episodes of seeing: "I looked into his eyes"; fish eyes not returning "my stare"; "I admired his sullen face"; "then I saw"; "I stared and stared." This is a poem that advertises its visual interests, a poem that documents the act of looking. Further, some words ("visual words") depend on vision for their very meaning – the "shiny" entrails, the "dramatic reds and blacks," the oil rainbow. Most subtly, the poem offers a set of explicit instructions for how to imagine the fish's eyes: "the irises backed and packed / with tarnished tinfoil / seen through the lenses / of old scratched isinglass." If the reader can image the (admittedly obscure) isinglass – a thin,

transparent sheet of mica – and then mentally image tinfoil on the other side of it, the eyes are captured, and captured visually.

Finally, the aforementioned visual enticements are not compromised by an overpowering metrical regularity that would distract the reader from the poem's meaning and images. Though the poem does brush up against iambic regularity from time to time ("He hung a grunting weight"; "stained and lost through age"; "like medals with their ribbons"; "the oarlocks on their strings") the poem continually retreats from any such regularity, withdrawing into looser patterns of accent. This metrical flexibility precludes any serious phonological distraction that might impede visual imaging.

"The Fish" invites a quite straightforward visual imagery analysis, but other poems prove more challenging and just as rewarding. Consider another of Bishop's poems, a piece that thematizes the act of looking: "Poem." This poem describes a "little painting (a sketch for a larger one?)" that comes into the speaker's hands, reminds her of a real place she has seen, and thus sparks a meditation on life, art, and memory. "Poem," rather than merely activating key pro-imagery features, plays on the differences between the painted image and the real world image that the painting describes; right away, its title implies that the poem will attend to layers of representation – this is a poem that represents a painting that represents a real world scene, and one interested in this multiplication of mediations.

Both images – the painted image and the world/memory image of the real scene – are fleshed out through concrete diction and paratactic disjunctures, but the poem gives consistent preference to the painted image, reminding the reader that the speaker is examining a painting, an artifact. Concrete words that might encourage a clear world image are quickly followed by cues that bring the specific painted artifact back into focus:

Elm trees, low hills, a thin church steeple
— that gray-blue wisp — or is it? In the foreground
a water meadow with some tiny cows,
two brushstrokes each, but confidently cows; (176)

The poem insists that the reader create an image of the painted scene rather than of the natural scene that inspired the painting; the poem insists on the artistic product rather than the concrete referent.

Yet at the same time, this insistence seems pointedly post-hoc: the poem invites the real world image and then denies it through clear cues to painting. Strangely, the poem seems to actively encourage (through its use of concrete language and paratactic separation between terms) a visual image of the real world referent, only to quickly replace it with the painted image; the pro-imagery textual features soon give way to the materiality of the painting and even art-centric visual prompts (e.g., "foreground.") Though the topic of "Poem" is a painting, the poem appears to solicit a world image first, and then correctively remind the reader that the "real" image is a painted one. (Similarly, the title works to remind the reader that the "real" material of the poem is a sequence of words.) Consider the interplay of world and painting in this description:

Up closer, a wild iris, white and yellow,
fresh-squiggled from the tube.
The air is fresh and cold; cold early spring
clear as gray glass; a half inch of blue sky
below the steel-gray storm clouds.
(They were the artist's specialty.)

Here we have the iris and then the tube of paint, the air and then the "half inch of blue sky." The poem consistently tells the reader that what is on view is a painting; this insistent reminding only implies that the reader would have been automatically imaging the world image, not an image of the painting. In other words, these correctives speak to the need for correcting; these correctives confirm that the poem's "visual" language produces images of the world at large. The poem strains against the priority of the world image. (This priority probably corresponds to most readers' personal experience: the word "cow" likely sparks an image of the animal, not an image of a *painting* of the animal.) What's more, while the very non-visuality of the cold air and the somewhat abstract diction of "spring" (rather than young grass or flowers) seem at odds with a painting and might instead suggest a tactile image or a bodily sense, the poem nonetheless turns back to the dimensions of the painting – its "half inch" – and then, if there is any remaining doubt about what is on view, to the artist himself. The following image metaphor – a "specklike bird" – only maintains the turn toward artifice; the reader who toggles between the correspondent structures of flyspeck and tiny painted bird will remain safely attached to the surface of the painting. The poem seems preoccupied with the idea that the reader might generate the "wrong," non-painted image.

"Poem" even dramatizes the moment of epiphanic memory, the moment in which the painted image provokes the speaker's memory image. Yet even the memory image is quickly pulled into the painting's artificial world and made subject to its mechanisms:

> Heavens, I recognize the place, I know it!
> It's behind—I can almost remember the farmer's name.
> His barn backed on that meadow. There it is,
> titanium white, one dab. The hint of steeple,

filaments of brush hairs, barely there…

The speaker's amazed recognition, *almost* accompanied by a real world linguistic referent (the farmer's name), suggests that the speaker has achieved a real world imagistic referent. Yet in spite of the poem's encouragements toward worldly authenticity here – the move from the indeterminate article "a" ("a thin church steeple"; "a wild iris") to the decisive modifier of "that meadow," the line-ending herald of "there it is" – the world of the painting, with its "dab" and "brush hairs," quickly reasserts itself. The epiphanic memory image does not appear; only the painted image does.

In the last section of the poem the speaker meditates upon the intersections of life and art, and suggests that the two intermingle so much as to appear indistinguishable at times:

—our looks, two looks:

art "copying from life" and life itself,

life and the memory of it so compressed

they've turned into each other. Which is which? (177)

The numbers here suggest that art and the memory of life are corollaries. But what does this mean? On one hand, it suggests generally that art commemorates life and creates an archive about the world. But more specifically (and disturbingly) it also implies that art can create our personal memories: art can rewrite or rewire our memories. Indeed, the poem revealed this very consequence in dramatizing the failure of the epiphanic memory image — despite a surge of personal recognition, the speaker only saw the painted image: the art image spoke for the memory image. (More literally, the verbal "Poem" itself spoke for the art image.) One must not forget, either, that the poem's repeated structure of correction both implies the priority (or apparent naturalness) of the world image and reveals its ultimate domination by the persistent art

image. With "Poem," then, we see that attention to a poem's pattern of visual cues – including concreteness, disjuncture, and image metaphor but also types of images in general – can inform the poem's deeper meaning.

For a final example, consider Gerard Manley Hopkins's "Pied Beauty." In this short poem Hopkins pays tribute to the beauty of nature and to the strange beauty of human invention; here is the poem in full:

Glory be to God for dappled things—
For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plough;
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.

"Pied Beauty" moves from the world of nature, with all its "dappled things," to the world of human creation ("gear and tackle and trim"). In fact, the poem even bridges these two worlds with line five ("Landscape plotted and pieced – fold, fallow, and plough"), which reveals the impact of human cultivation on the natural landscape. After line six, the poem is largely dominated by adjectives, which soon combine in related dyads.

One compelling reading of this poem treats it as a lament on this progression from God's "things" into human devices. (It must be emphasized that this reading is only *one* possible way of interpreting the poem; other, less pessimistic readings also exist.) By this reading, the poem dramatizes the irresistible movement from nature to artifice. As Franklin Burroughs writes, "So the first half of the poem is all natural images until the sixth line, where we find the tools that convert natural creations into human ones…We leave the world of vivid perceptions and enter a world where language seems to generate itself. *Fickle* begets *freckled* by a recombination of consonants. *Swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim* are produced by logical opposition and alliteration. Observation has led to generalization; the things of this world have led us out of this world, into language" (136). Human invention leaves us talking in circles, far from the natural objects that nurture our lives.

An analysis of visual imagery effects can deepen this reading. One should note that the trauma of leaving nature behind is signaled by a rapid loss of visual images; to lose nature is, for the reader, to lose mental images, to become inwardly blind. In terms of imageability, the poem (after the first, introductory line) practically charts incremental moves on one of Paivio's seven point concreteness scales: from a streaked cow to bird wings to a fallow field to "gear, " "freckled," "sour," "change." Of course, esoteric language rises up again: one must know that "brinded" means streaked to image the cow, and what "rose-moles" are to see them on the trout. Despite this consideration, the words generally move from concrete to abstract as the poem progresses. (The poem is from beginning to end heavily paratactic, which maintains concreteness effects at the level of the sentence. Of course, parataxis does not create imageability within abstract language.) The trend towards abstraction quickly sabotages the reader's ability to form visual images.

In line with this increasing blindness, this loss of imagery, over the course of the poem, it makes sense that a visually-apt simile appears early, in line two. Here the "skies of couple color" and the "brinded cow" present a loose version of the image metaphor: though the cow and the sky do not correspond in shape, their similarity of variegation may encourage the reader to switch back and forth from one imaged dappling to the other. Likewise, visual words (words that depend on visual perception or imagery for their meaning) in general decline in frequency as the poem progresses. Early on, we have "dappled things" (the generic class that includes examples beyond the poem), the multicolored sky, the streaked cow, the "rose-moles" (that we must – for lack of better information – process in terms of color), and the "fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls," or the chestnuts that gleam like red coals. After the turn towards human creation, there are only "freckled" things and the light-dependent "adazzle" and "dim" things, but these words float unattached to specific objects and therefore resist visualization more than the earlier examples.

An analysis of the visual claims of "Pied Beauty," then, supports the post-lapsarian (or alternately, naively pastoral) reading of the poem. The analysis suggests that the poem encourages fewer and fewer visual images over the course of the poem, mirroring the turn away from nature and toward abstract intellectual recombination. The reader is less and less likely to "see" the dappled poetic objects that the title valorizes as the poem moves toward its conclusion.

So: this is one possible consequence for my ideal reader – a heightened attention to pro-imagery (and by extension, anti-imagery) textual features, with psychological accounts as support, wherever those features may be found. This study offers readers tools that they can take with them to other writings; my ideal reader will take the lessons of this project to non-Imagist poetry, and even prose. This increased awareness of textual features can influence

interpretations. With both Elizabeth Bishop's and Hopkins's poems (poems that are, perhaps needless to say, very different from the Imagist style), an attention to both pro-visualization enticements and anti-imagery occlusions helped create and corroborate arguments about the poems. In other words, poetics can inform hermeneutics.

In addition to the hermeneutical value of this textual features, however, there are deeper possible consequences for this study. For one, this study puts a spotlight on the larger class of motivated reader responses: this study should encourage readers to investigate how texts influence their responses, visual and otherwise. If readers follow this larger lesson here, they will examine the ways in which their responses are molded by the machinery of the text. Their examinations will help generate new pathways within poetics, and thus help balance out the critical field, which has been dominated by hermeneutical approaches for almost the whole last century.

This project may well be part of two significant resurgences in literary criticism: a resurgence in poetics, and a renewed interest in the visual image. Of the two, however, the second resurgence seems to have more momentum right now. Though mental imagery has been neglected for much of the past century, cast aside by both Behaviorists and many New Critics, discarded within the "linguistic turn," the visual imagination is experiencing a comeback: its neural basis is being analyzed by neuroscientists, and its functions and powers are being studied by psychologists. Literary critics now have the insights of this collective inquiry at their disposal, and can take advantage of this exciting resurgence to contribute towards a deeper understanding of the textual experience. As imagery takes its place alongside language at the center of cognition, theorists of literature should look forward to new conceptions of textual

interpretation and interrelation that pay homage not just to the our linguistic capacities but also to the visual imagination.

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